ADMIRABLE
LIFE OF
S. WENEFRIDE

1635

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ANINON
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HVTHII

BOUND BY F. BEDFORD

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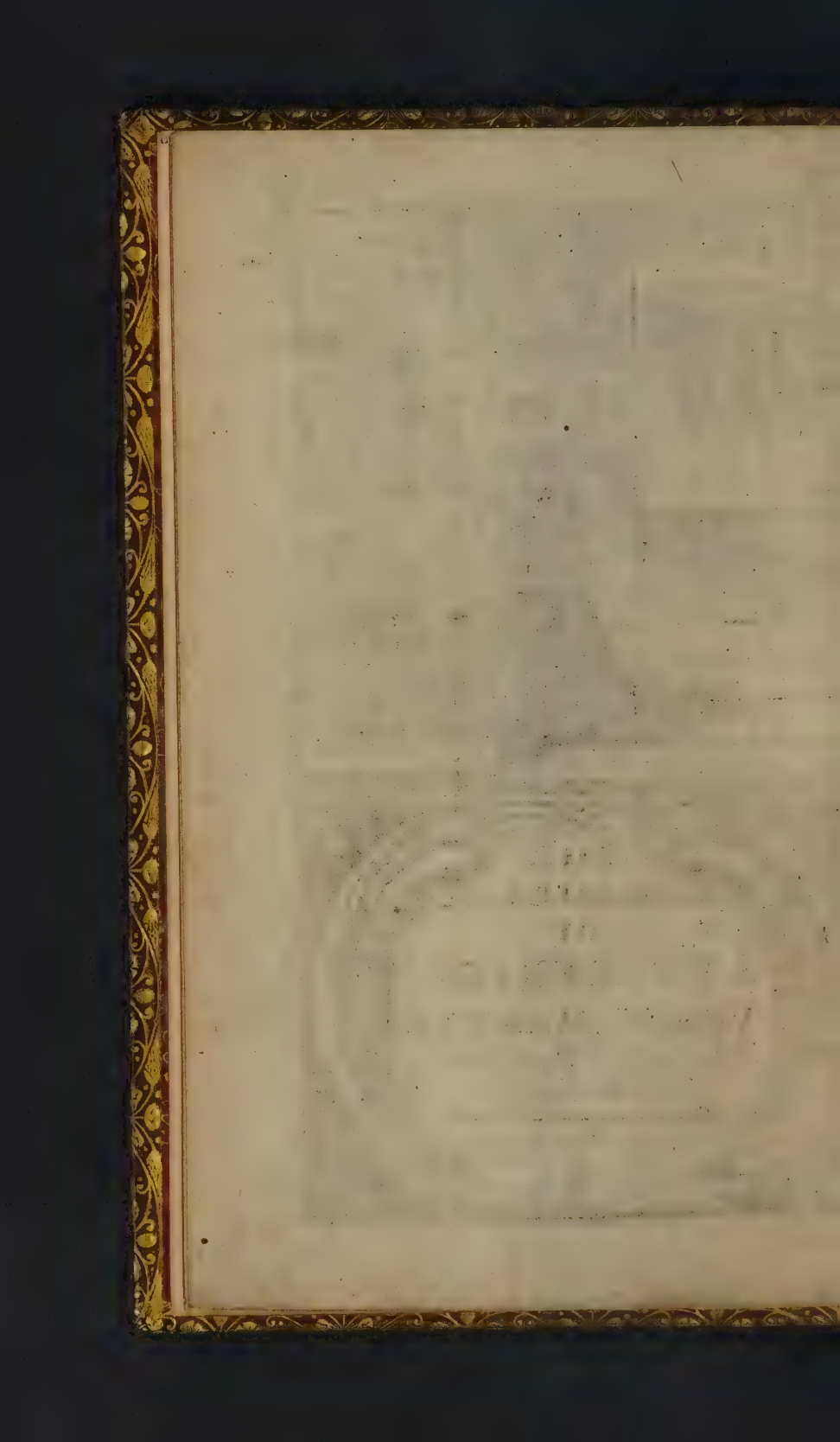
THE ADMIRABLE LIFE OF S. WENEFRIDE, VIRGIN, MARTYR, *Abbesse, & Patroness of Wales.*

Permissu Superiorum
Anno 1635.
Mart. Baes f.



THE

ADMIRABLE LIFE OF SAINT VVENEFRIDE

Virgin, Martyr, Abbesse.

Written in Latin aboue 500. yeares ago, by ROBERT, Monke and Priour of *Shrewsbury*, of the Ven. Order of S. BENEDICT.

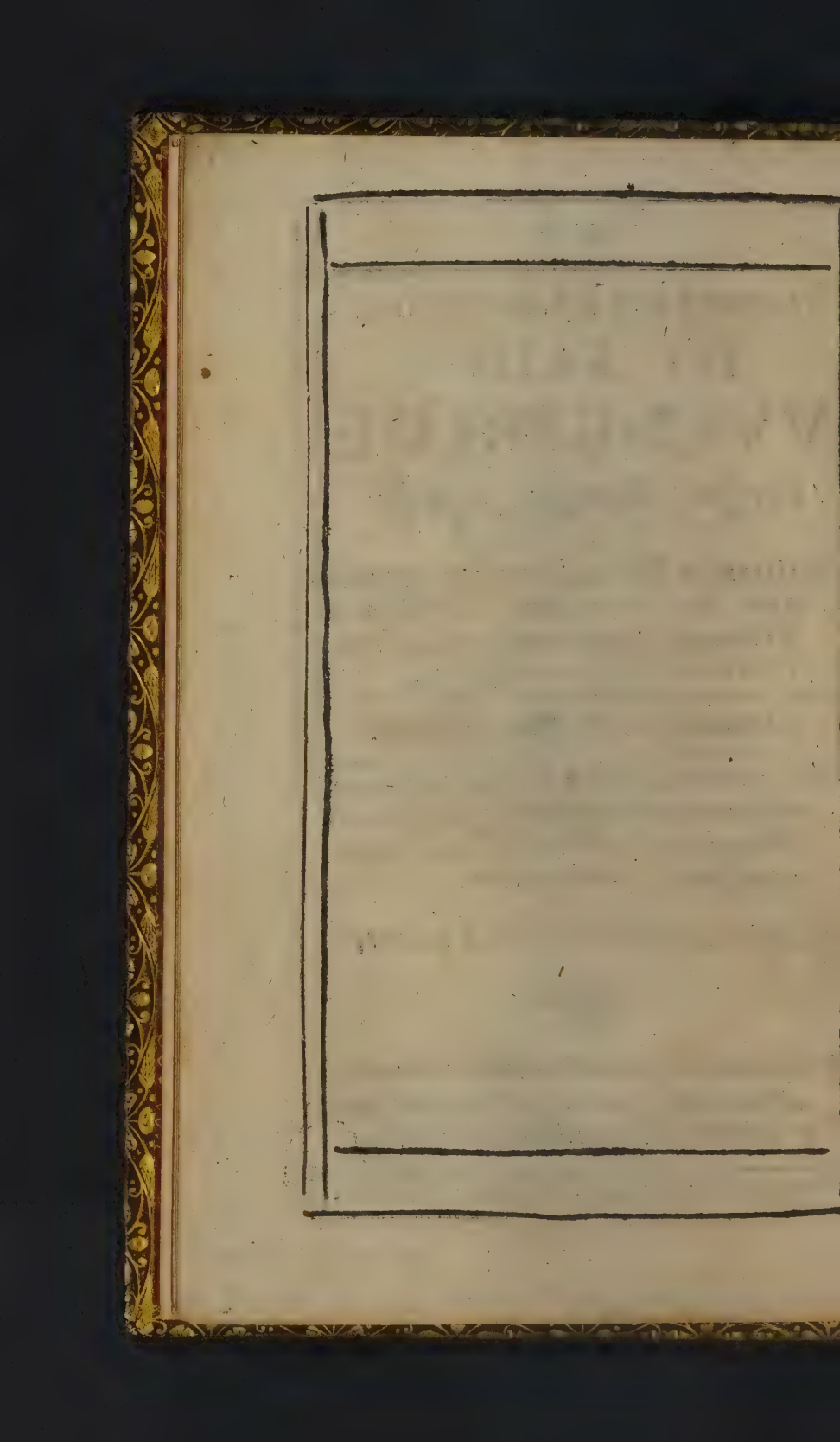
Deuided into two Bookes.

And now translated into English, out of a very ancient and authenticall Manuscript, for the edification and comfort of Catholikes.

By I. F. of the Society of IESVS.

Her memory is worthily honoured amonge Men, whose Soule is passed to the ioyes of Angells. S. Max. hom. in S. Euseb.

Permissu Superiorū M. DC. XXXV.



TO
THE NOBLE
GENTLEWOMAN
his Vertuous, & much
Honored friend,
Mrs.
DOROTHY BARLOW.

Albeit, your English Birth, and French breeding, in Pallaces commonly, and Courtes, with very

Noble and Princely Ladies, haue made You a Stranger to Wales *for the greateſt part of your life; yet your* Marriage *ſince, vvith a chiefe Gentleman of that Country, and many Children borne there (liuing partes of your ſelfe, as that great Prince of* Philoſophers *calleth them) may vvorthily make me repute you* S. Wenefrides *Countrey-vvoman.*

Your ſingular Deuo-

tion

tion *beſides, to that renovvned Saint, and great* Patroneſſe *of* WALES, *vvhich lately cauſed you (as I haue heard) to meaſure, vvith no fevv Attendants of friends and ſeruants about you, the vvhole length of that Countrey, to viſit the deuout & memorable Place of her* Martyrdome, *added to that former* Reſpect, *and a conſtant deſire vvithall in my ſelfe, to*

honour, *in vvhat I may, & ſerue you; haue powerfully preuayled, & moued me to preſent this tranſlated Life of that glorious* VIRGIN, ABBESSE *and* MARTYR, *eſpecially vnto you.*

VVho as a bright morning-ſtar ceaſeth not euen nowv, to shyne, in her owvne knowvne Graces, *and daily* Honours *done by deuout people vnto her; vvhen as other* Stars, *in*

this

this late darkenes, ouer-vvhelming our Countrey, are quite vanished out of liuing mẽs sights: I meane, innumerable Men, and VVomen of Wales, *very conspicuous in tymes past, for their admired* Sanctity, *and honoured in Churches dedicated particularly vnto them, are now vtterly forgotten, and neuer againe, as knowne Saints, to be honoured by vs, vntil in glory vve shall*

come to behould their Soules *first (if wve make ourselues wworthy of that happines, by a neere practise and perfect imitation of their Vertues) and* Bodies *afterwvards, out of their nowv contemned, and trampled ashes, resplendently rayſed.*

And this Day-ſtar *of ours* S. Wenefride, *ſtill shining in the Glory of her Merits, after other Saintes memories are paſt, and*

Monu-

Monuments defaced, may haue, perchance, a happy Relation (as the naturall Day-ſtarr *hath to the riſing* Sunne) *to an ending of this* Darke Night *of Religions, different from that, anciently by her, and holily profeſsed, (vvherin likevviſe her ovvne, and other Saintes* Shrines, *haue byn lamentably defaced) by a vvished reſtoring of Catholique Religion, vvhich as an heauen-*

ly Light *hath ſcarſly euer beene obſcured, in your ovvne, or your Husbands ancient Families.*

A rare Happines in theſe tymes, and to fevv Houſes of Noble note, ſo graciouſly affoarded by the Authour of all Graces, vvhereby, their earthly Worth, *hath vvith heauenly Graces ben happily matched; and are ſo eminently novv graced, by Your ovvne particular*

Ver-

Vertues, as S. Wenefride *will gladly accept such a Patroneſſe of hert Life printed, who ſo holily imitateth the ſame, as it was acted by her. Wherin her Bleſſed Interceſsion hath already, and will I doubt not, perſeuerantly aſſiſte you, by obteyning of her Diuine* Spouſe, *Temporall* Bleſſings, *and Eternall* Graces, *for you and yours; which I daily wish, and hartily pray*

for,

for, as your euer deuoted friend, and ſeruant,

In Chriſt IESVS,

I. F.

THE

THE TRANSLATOVRS PREFACE TO HIS READER.

AMongst many people Apostolically conuerted to the Fayth of Christ, the *Britans* or ancient Inhabitants of England, are vndoubtedly to be numbred, as *Origen* 4. *in Ezechielem*, *Tertullian contra Iudæos*, *Dorotheus* in his *Synopsis*, *Theodoret*, and others haue expresly affirmed, besides many home proofes, and pregnant testimonies of that their so

timely

timely conuerſion. Which primitiue Fayth of theirs hauing byn, by a continuall mixture of Romans, and other Infidells liuing amongſt them, and perſecuting them for the ſame, exceedingly decayed; was againe cultiuated by *Fugatius*, and *Damianus* Apoſtolicall Preachers, ſent for that purpoſe by Pope *Elutherius* vnto them, the very next age after the Apoſtles.

Since which tyme albeit they loſt to the Saxons, the greateſt, & fruitefulleſt part of their Country, and were enforced to betake themſelues to the mountanous places of *Wales* (as now it is called) and *Cornewall*; yet haue they ſtill vntill this laſt age, vnalteredly maintayned their primitiue Fayth, and Religion, as in the firſt

two Chapters of the Protestants Apology for the Roman Church, written by that learned man *M. Brerely*, is most cleerly proued, & demonstrated.

And to recompence perhaps, their Constancy therein, and sufferings for it, they were blessed from tyme to tyme with great numbers of *Saintes*, flouriſhing amongst them; so as many Parishes in *Wales* and *Cornewall*, retayne no other names at this day, then such as anciently they receaued from holy Men and Women liuing in them. Amongst all which no one was for sanctity & miraculous testimonies thereof, more then *S. Wenefride* famously renowned; and her Monuments now after a generall vastation of Monasteries, and Saintes memo-

ries

ries in our Countrey, remayne vndefaced, and no leſſe glorious in *Wales* and *England*, then *S. Catherines* Tombe on *Mount Sinai*, amongſt fierce *Mahometans* and *Paynims*, is ſtraungely, yet conſerued.

And as the Sepulcher of that renowned Saint, is by faithfull people in thoſe Eaſterne parts of the world Religiouſly viſited: ſo in like manner do multitudes of holy Pilgrims frequently now reſort vnto the place of *S. Wenefrids* martyrdome, & wonder to ſee ſuch a floud of Criſtall pure Water gushing there at once, out of the Earth, and a moſt ſumptuous Chappell ſtanding yet ouer it. So that the three Fountaynes neere *Rome*, which iſſued miraculouſly out of the ground, where *S. Paul*

was martyred, are not by much ſo curiouſly with building couered.

Moreouer, the waters of this holy Well, ſeeme to haue in thē more then naturall vertues, by giuing a musky, and moſt delightfull ſweetnes to the greene moſſe growing on the wals of this ſtately incloſure, and colouring all the ſtones which lye in the bottome thereof, with ſpots, as it were, of pure bloud, in them ſtrangly appearing. Many miracles alſo haue ben dōne heeretofore to manifeſt the ſanctity of this place; which becauſe they haue not ben by depoſitions of perſons ſworne, and publique Inſtruments authentically approued, I forbeare heere further to mention, then as my Authour doth afterwards recount them;

and will only ſay, that this Venerable and Coſtly monument, is the more to be admired, for that it ſtandeth in ſo hilly, poore, and barren a Countrey, which hath ſcarſly any thing, but this fayre building remarkable in it, exactly therefore drawne out by *M. Speed* in his Table of *Flint-ſhyre*, and in his Comment hiſtorically declared; yet with this tale ridiculouſly added, that Catholiques viſiting the *Well*, do really belieue the rednes of the ſtones to be the Martyrs very bloud, and the Moſſe growing therein her hayre, like to one of *Ouids* Metamorpholing Fables.

The Life of this Noble Virgin and Martyr, was diligently and authentically gathered (as himſelfe in his Prologue profeſſeth)

by *Robertus Salopienſis*, a learned Monke and *Priour* of *Shrewsbury*, of the holy order of S. Benedict, liuing in King *Stephens* tyme, & for his great ſincerity, by *Cardinall Baronius*, *Surius*, *Capgraue*, *Pits*, *Poſſeuinus*, and others, worthily commended. Whoſe booke coppied truly out of an old authenticall Manuſcript, I haue heere in ſenſe faithfully tranſlated, and done no otherwiſe in altering the Authors old phraſes, ſcarſely expreſſible in good Engliſh, then as if I had ſtripped ſome body out of Welſh courſe frize, and put him into a ſuite of Engliſh playne Kareſay.

And if the matter of the Booke, conteyning in it ſundry ſtrange and miraculous paſſages, ſhall ſeeme ridiculous to *Proteſtants*

chancing to read them, it is not much to be wondred at, ſithence they will be their owne chooſers, euen in the very beliefe of ſacred Verities themſelues, diuinely reuealed; and ſleight, as fabulous Legends, the Liues of Saintes, written by *S. Athanaſius*, *S. Ambroſe*, S. *Hierome*, *S. Climachus*, *S. Gregory*, and other holy Fathers.

It ſufficed my Author, and ſo it ſhall me, that deuout Catholiques for whoſe inſtruction and comfort he penned firſt his Hiſtorie, will piouſly and probably aſſent to that, which heere is credibly propoſed vnto them, auoyding two extremes therein; the one is of belieuing things ouerlightly, & the other of belieuing nothing at all but as fancies, and ſelfe-opinions do guide them. The which,

in Sectaries following commonly this latter extreme in their iudgment of Catholique writings, is a kind of Infidelity, and Impiety mixed togeather: for if God be wonderfull in his Saintes (as the Royall Prophet telleth vs, *Psal. 67.*) and Christ in his Ascension towards heauen did so expressly promise, that these signes should follow such as did beleiue in him, *In my name* (said he) *they shall cast out Diuells, they shall speake with new tongues &c.* why should we vpon probable testimonies refuse to beleiue, such wonders to haue ben done by Saintes, as diuine testifications of their true Fayth, and great graces heere obtayned?

The sacred body of this Virginall Blessed Saint, was solemnly translated to *Shrewsbury* in this

Authors tyme in the yeare of our Lord 1138. and raigne of *K. Stephen*, and there, in his owne Abbey magnificently interred, that greater honour and veneration, in ſo populous, and Religious a Citty (as that was then) might be yielded vnto it; where it continued, for aboue 400. yeares, till Hereſie preuayled vtterly to ouerthrow in our Country the publique profeſsion of Catholique Religion, and deface the Venerable monuments thereof euery where almoſt then extant. In which cõmon ruine & calamity hapning, the ſhrine of this great Saint with numbers of others became ſacrilegiouſly defaced, and her ſacred Reliques lye ſince diſperſed God knoweth where or how, vntill by his omnipotency, they ſhall come

to be vnited againe, & moſt glorioufly rayſed, *For God* (ſayth the ſame holy Prophet *Pſal.* 33.) *doth conſerue all the bones of his ſeruants:* and it hath increaſed I doubt not their ioyes accidentall in heauen, to haue had heere on earth for his ſake, their Reliques by the Churches enemies, and haters of true Religion contemptuouſly abuſed, after due Reuerence yeilded by deuout people vnto them, and ſingular bleſſings receaued from Almighty God by their powerfull interceſſion.

Neither haue moderne Sectaries ſhewed in any one act more, the little Communion, which they haue in this world, or are likely to haue in the other, with the Saintes of Chriſts Church, then in contemning, ſcattering,

and destroying their Reliques, of which in generall *S. Ambrose* writeth thus, *Serm. 93. de Sanctis Nazario & Celso. If thou aske me what I honour in their flesh and bones now dissolued and consumed? I honour in the Martyrs flesh, the scarres of those woundes, which for Christ he sustayned; I honour the memory of his vertue still liuing; I honour in his ashes the seedes of Eternity; I honour the body that taught me to loue Christ, and not to feare the cruellest death for him. Why should not faithfull soules honour that body, which Diuells tremble at? &c. quod Christum honorauit in gladio, quod cum Christo regnabit in cælo: that body, I say, which honored Christ in the sword, and which shall reigne with him in Heauen. These (* sayth *S. Basill* speaking of the 40. Martyrs Reliques) *are those*

Who protect our Countrey, and like strong Towers guard vs from our enemies.

Wherefore I may vse, of such as scattered, and destroyed the holy reliques of *S. Wenefride*, and many other Saintes in our Country, *S. Gregory Nazianzens* words in his first Oration against *Iulian* the Apostata; *Thou hast not reuerenced the Hoastes slaine for Christ, whose bodies, yea very drops of their bloud, or other small signes of their passions, can worke the same effects which their soules themselues can doe*; to wit such sudaine cures of infirmities and diseases, as *S. Austin lib. 22. de Ciuitate Dei cap.* 8. affirmeth by *S. Stephens* Reliques, as they passed through *Afrique* towards *Rome*, to haue byn done in his presence: which Protestants will

as little belieue, as they do the miraculous passages of *S. Wenefride* recounted in this Historie, amongst whome there is no one so straunge, but the like may be found in other Saintes liues, by holy & ancient Fathers authentically written; and in some of them far more straunge: which piously read, & probably belieued by faithful soules for 1400. yeares since, cannot but temeariously be reiected now, and contemned by Protestants; whose corrupt Iudgment, as I regard not in this my translation: so I hope good Catholiques will read it with edification and comfort. For it may well delight them, as it doth me, to thinke that we haue anciently had such store of renowned Saintes liuing in our Country, as, be-

sides this life, *D. Harpsfeld*, the English Martyrologe, Prudentiall Ballance, *M. Broughton*, and other ancienter historians do witnesse, though the Names, and liues of the greatest part of them are only in the booke of life registred, and will in the generall Iudgmēt be gloriously reuealed.

That *S. Wenefride* likewise, should liue againe, after her head cut off, and do the things which heere are written of her in her Historie (the chiefe blocke which incredulous Readers perhaps will stumble at) is no more hard to be belieued, then that *Lazarus* after he had ben dead, and stinking in his graue, should liue agayne, sit at table with Christ, and be Bishop of Marsills in *France* many yeares after. And if it be obiected

that

that Christ himselfe, did worke that miracle, able to do all things: I may well answere, that he promised his owne power, and far greater wonders then himselfe had wrought, to be done by his seruants, extant now in authenticall Histories as certainely since performed.

Lastly, I intreat my courteous Reader, for a Conclusion of this my Preface, to note & mend with his penne, these ensuing errours of my Translation, committed in the printing by strangers, wholy ignorant of our English tongue.

Faults

Faults escaped in the Printing.

PAg. 24. lin. 7. *dele* that
Pag. 45. lin. 9. where *read* which
Pag. 75. lin. 1. as *read* or
Pag. 82. lin. 9. their *read* his
Pag. 88. lin. 5. *dele* so
Pag. 94. lin. vlt. his *read* this
Pag. 103. lin. 11. *dele* most
Pag. 109. lin. 16. saying *read* said
Pag. 119. lin. vlt. noble Virginity, *read* Martyrdome for your Virginity.
Pag. 120. lin. 1. *dele* of your Martyrdome.
Pag. 121. lin. 14. *dele* he
Pag. 128. lin. 5. Charity *read* Clarity
Pag. 146. lin. 16. in, *read* in a suddaine
Pag. 148. lin. 14. and to be, *dele* to
Pag. 165. lin. 3. fall *read* fell
Pag. 173. lin. 10. *Wales*, *read* that Countrey.
Pag. 204. lin. 7. streames *read* streame
Pag. 225. lin. 2. hath *read* had
Pag. 251. lin. 9. was *read* he was
Pag. 269. lin. vlt. little *read* so little.

The Prayer, and Sequence *of* S. Wenefride, *taken forth of the ancient Missall of England, according to the vse of* SARVM.

Oratio.

OMnipotens sempiterne Deus, qui beatam Wenefredam Virginitatis præmio decorasti: fac nos quæsumus eius pia intercessione, mundi huius blandimenta postponere, & cum ipsa perennis gloriæ sedem obtinere. Per Dominum nostrum &c.

The Prayer.

ALmighty *and euerlasting God, who hast adorned* Blessed Wenefride *with the reward of Virginity; grant vs we beseech thee, through her pious intercession, to set aside the delights of this world, and obteyne with her, the throne of euerlasting glory. Through our* Lord *Iesus Christ &c.*

SEQVEN-

SEQVENTIA.

VIrgo vernans velut Rosa,
Agni Sponsa speciosa,
Martyr Christi pretiosa,
Wenefreda floruit.

Ex Britannis oriunda,
Fide firma, spe iocunda,
Actu sancta, mente munda,
Mundi mendâ caruit.

Hanc occîdit *Carodocus*,
Quem mox sorbet Orci focus,
Qui prauorum extat locus,
Quo Sathan exuitur.

Huius argumento rei,
Fons ebullit nutu Dei,
Rubricatæ speciei,
Quo caput præciditur.

Mira multa hic patrantur,
Cæci vident, muti fantur,
Morbi omnes effugantur.
Cum fide petentium.

Glorioſa *Wenefreda*,
Maris fluctus nobis seda,
Ne fiamus hosti præda,
Pia fer præsidium. Amen.

The same in old English.

AS a sweete Rose in pleasant spring,
Of heauenly Lambe Spouse louely faire
And Martyr deare of Christ our King
S. Wenefrede *did flourish heere.*

Descended well of Brittish race,
In Fayth now firme, and Hope *secure,*
With workes Holy, *and Soule in Grace,*
From worldly filth perseuered pure.

This sacred Mayd did Cradocke *kill,*
And him Hell swallowed presently,
Where teares in vayne do run downe still
And Sathan burnes incessantly.

A Token sure of this strang thing,
Bespotted all with blouddy red,
A Well *by Gods command doth spring*
Where Tyrant fierce cut off her head.

Heere wõders great Gods hand doth worke
The blind do see, the dumbe do speake,
Diseases which in bodies lurke
Are cured, when Fayth is not weake.

O glorious Virgin Wenefrede,
To vs the raging sea appease,
And free vs so from Sathans dread
That he on vs may neuer seize. Amen.

THE

THE AVTHORS OWNE PROLOGVE TO THE *LIFE* OF S. WENEFRIDE.

To the right Reuerend Father, *Guarinus* Prior of *Worcester*, *Robert*, his ſpirituall Sonne, Prior alſo vnworthy of *Shrewsbury*, wiſheth Grace to walke vprightly in the way of Gods Commandements.

SINCE he who hath receaued the leaſt talent at Gods hands, is bound charitably to imploy the

ſame, in the ſeruice of him who freely beſtowed it, and to the good of ſuch as may be edified and beneſitted ſpiritually by it; not hiding the ſame vnder a bushell, or reſeruing it to himſelfe alone, which will become the more his owne by being charitably communicated to others in a holy imitation of our Redeemers bounties, and graces vpon vs vniuerſally beſtowed: I haue iuſtly feared, out of this reſpect, to conceale from others, vnited in the ſame band of Chriſtian Faith, and Charity with me, and particularly from your

Ve-

Venerable ſelfe, much reſpected by me, the Collection which I haue lately made of the Bleſſed Virgin S. Wenefrides *life: the reading whereof, will, I doubt not, help much to increaſe and perfit heauenly piety, and loue eminently already, and exemplarly to many shining in You; delighted alſo to dilate the glory of God, & his Saints by workes like to this, which you haue by frequent letters, and earneſt intreaties required of me.*

I haue gathered the ſame, partly from the Ancient, and Vndoubted Monuments of ſuch

Monaſteries, and Churches as this Bleſſed Virgin is knowne to haue liued in, and partly from the relation of ſundry Ancient Prieſts, for their great learning ſanctity of life, and Religious profeſsion, made Venerable, & worthy of all credit, in their aſsertions, and depoſitions vnto me.

Three cauſes haue moued me to publish the true knowledge of this Saints life, ſo by me attayned vnto. The firſt, was a wholſome feare (as I haue ſaid) to be reproued by my Eternall Iudge, for hiding vnder groũd,

and

and not imploying profitably as I ought the talent which he hath lent me. The second, was my especiall loue, and deuotion to this most renowned Virgin and Martyr of our Countrey, that by her sanctity, and great merits heere by me declared, she might by faithfull soules be the more deuoutely honoured, serued, and prayed vnto. The third, was a particular desire which I haue charitably had to edifie my owne Brethren, humbly in their deuotions, and instantly intreating this labour of me.

As for S. Wenefrides *pre-*

tended iourney to Rome, and other particulars vulgarly only, and by persons of no credit fabulously reported, I haue wholly omitted them; and forborne likewise to set downe some other certaine, and vndoubted relations, concerning her life, because I would not be tedious, and ouerlarge in my manner of writing: this which I haue heere gathered being sufficient, in my opinion, and yours also I hope, to declare the eminent sanctity and graces of this most sacred Virgin, by whose powerfull intercession, and your holy prayers, I hope to

re-

receaue, at her heauenly Spouses hands, some small reward of my labours, and paynes in this worke vndertaken.

THE

THE FIRST BOOKE, conteyning the Hiſtory of S. *Wenefrids* Life.

CHAPTER I.

Of S. Beuno *his great ſanctity; how he was inſpired by God to goe to* S. Wenefrids *Father; how liberally he was entertayned by him, and had his only child commended for her Education vnto him.*

IN the Weſterne part of great Britanny, called

VVales, cõioyned Eaſtwards in the ſame continent, with *England*, and rounded on all other ſides with *Seuerne*, and the *Ocean*, flourished in times paſt innumerable Saintes men and women of ſingular ſanctity and merit, as their ſeuerall Shrines, and ſtately Monuments yet remayning do teſtify; amongſt whome, in King *Eluith* the ſecond his tyme, one *S. Beuno* was for his wonderfull graces eſpecially renowned; who hauing, out of a holy deſire to imitate the pouer-

ty of his heauenly Lord, and to become a true Pilgrime heere on earth, forſaken his owne Countrey, and trodden vnder foote ſuch glorious pompes, and pleaſures of the world as he might at home haue enioyed, made himſelfe firſt a Moncke, and ſoone after arriued to ſuch perfection and ſanctity of life, that he became a common Father of Religious perſons.

For no ſooner had he built a Church and Monaſtery in one place, and ſetled

there-

there in regular discipline and great purity of life, a certaine number of Religiõs persons, but he trauelled to another part of the Countrey, to do there the like also, as Gods holy spirit for the benefit of many, peculiarly directed him; so that at length he entred into the territory of a rich, & potent Lord called *Theuith* sonne to a chiefe Counsellour of the King, & a principal gouerner of the Coũtry, who equalled his Illustrious birth, by his Noble, Reli-

gious, & exemplar demeanours.

When Venerable *Beuno* came to this Lords houſe, he was moſt reſpectfully by him entertayned, and after charitable ſalutatiõs paſſed betweene them, the Saint tould him, that he was ſent by God to erect a Church in his Territory, as he had done in other places: and I doubt not (ſaid he) but that God hath by a very feruent and peculiar inſpiration, drawne me hither from his other ſeruants, with whome

I liued els where with great content, to performe some great good particularly for you, and yours. Wherefore for his diuine Maiesties seruice, I humbly intreate a small part of your ample inheritance, to rayse therein a Church, where others with my selfe will daily pray for your safety.

The Noble man moued with the Saintes Venerable aspect and speaches, resolued forthwith, to graunt what he asked, and yielded this wise answere vnto him:

With good reaſon, holy Father, am I bound to giue you a part of what Lands I poſſeſſe, for the ſeruice of him, who gaue all vnto me: and I conceaue indeed that you haue pleaſured me much, in asking this Charity of me, more profitable to my ſelfe, then to you. Wherefore this very Mannour which now I liue in, I do from this tyme forward wholy alienate frō my ſelfe and all myne, yielding the poſſeſſion, & all right therof moſt gladly vnto you:

and

and hauing no more then one child, a tender Virgin, the greateſt delight indeed, and worldly ioy of my hart, I will beſides bequeath her to your holy inſtructions, and prayers, that her life may be holy, and her conuerſation ſuch, as may be pleaſing to God, and contentfull to me alſo.

And hauing put the Saint in poſſeſſion of the place, and promiſed moreouer to help him in the building by him intended, for a conuenient aboad of Gods

Religious children and ſeruants, he choſe afterwards a place for himſelfe to dwell in, vpon a high hill ouer against it, that when he could not inioy the holy mans preſence, he might a far of looke at leaſt towards him, and recreate himſelfe often in the day, by being with him holily and continually imployed in the ſeruice of God, ſpiritually conioyned.

CHAP. II.

How S. Wenefrides *Parents did help the Saint in building his Monastery; become also with their Daughter his deuout Auditours and obedient children: How likewise* S. Wenefride *vpon hearing* S. Beuno's *exhortations, resolued to leaue the world, and conserue her virginity, intreating him to moue also her Parents thereunto.*

WHen the Saint began to build

his

his Church and monaſtery the Lord *Theuith* did not faile with meanes liberally to further it, vouchſafing alſo many times to put his owne hands to this holy worke for the example of others, and the ſooner to finish it, as a thing by him for the glory of God, and good of his owne ſcule, exceedingly deſired. So as the Church was no ſooner rayſed, and made fit for the holy man to preach, and offer the diuine Sacrifice in, but himſelfe with his Wife and

VVenefride his Daughter, were daily and deuoutely preſent, at ſuch holy exerciſes, he obſeruing ſtill this Cuſtome to place his Child at the Saintes feete whilſt he preached, willing her to be attentiue to his ſpeaches. VVhich became not fruitles in her ſoule, holily euen then in her tender yeares, and graciouſly prepared feruently to practiſe in her life, ſuch heauenly documents as from the Saints mouth she continually learned. And her delight in hearing

him

him was ſuch, as with leaue of her Parents she often viſited him alone by her ſelfe, to be enriched the more, with a profitable, and practicall knowledge of diuine verities from him.

And albeit her Parents, as their moſt gracious and only child, dearely affected her, and had placed (after a worldly manner) the only hope of their poſterity in her, by reſoluing with an ample dowry to marry her in due tyme, to ſome Noble and chiefe perſon of the

Country; yet was it a thing moſt gratefull, and delightfull vnto them, to ſee her repayre often vnto the Saint, and to ſeaſon her innocent Soule, as a cleane veſſell ordayned by God to contayne afterwards a great meaſure of heauenly graces, with true piety taught vnto her by him, till at length her heauenly Spouſe, by cleare illuſtrations, and ardent inſpirations of his holy ſpirit, began to worke her ſweetly for himſelfe, & to make the very thought

of a worldly husband, hatefull to her ſoule, beginning to be ennamored of his owne diuine beauty, and reſolued, if she could, by ſanctity of life, and her virginity preſerued, purely to enioy him.

But now a feare only by her humbly, and dutifully conceaued, of diſpleaſing her Parents, by imparting this her purpoſe vnto them, troubled her very much, though daily therein more ardently, and vnalterably inflamed; till at length

in this doubtfull conflict, betweene humane & diuine loue passing in her thoghts, the powerfull Illuminator, and best Director of holy soules interiourly suggested this counsel vnto her, that by *Saint Beuno*, whose holy speaches had occasioned this pious resolution first in her hart firmely then rooted, to propose it vnto her Parents, whose power and authority she wisely knew to be very great with them, by reason they honoured him much, and in all things

he ſaid, gladly obeyed him. VVherfore one day finding him alone, after his manner holily retired, she humbly and boldly manifeſted her purpoſe thus vnto him.

Holy Father, I come here to make knowne vnto you the holy fruites of your ſpeaches, and Gods graces togeather in my Soule, whereby I haue byn effectually, and (I hope) happily moued to eſtrange my ſelfe wholy from Worldly contentments, and to conſecrate my Virginity purely

to him, who liberally gaue me the beeing I haue, and hath hitherto cõſerued this enriching Treaſure graciouſly in me; Humbly beſeeching you, to obteyne for me, my Parents good leaue and permiſſion ſo to continue. The Saint forthwith as beyond all expreſſion delighted to know that the ſeedes of diuine grace ſowne by his ſpeaches, were beginning to grow ſo happily in her, willingly vndertooke to obteyne of her Parents what she deſired

throgh the cõfidence which he had in their ſingular pietty towards God, & readines to do what his diuine Maieſty would haue them.

CHAP. III.

S. Beuno *propoſeth* S. VVenefrides *deſire to her Parents, obteyneth their grant therin; they giue away in almes her intended dowry, & ioy to ſee rare beginninges of future ſanctity, and ſolide vertues in their Daughter.*

THe holy mã, a powerfull Oratour with thé

who

who as Children reuerently respected, and desired to obey him, in a heauenly language imparted vnto them *S. VVenefrids* desires, and made them withall capable to know, that it would be no ordinary act of their due loue to God, gladly and freely to dedicate to his seruice what in this world was deareſt vnto them. Their answere vnto him, with teares of ioy and prayſing of Christ for his graces affoarded, so singularly, to their child, was no other

then a full, and free leaue giuen to *S. VVenefride* of forſaking the world to ſerue her heauenly Spouſe, who by ſo high and holy a vocation, had called her vnto him.

And ſo wishing her a happy progreſſe therein, they reſolued alſo to draw out of the ſame this benefitt to thēſelues, that giuing away to the poore, her ample dowry for a ſecular mariage by them prepared, and diſtributing in holy vſes beſides, a very great part of

their owne princely wealth and poſſeſsions as troubleſome vnto them, and (with pouerty delighted) due to the king of heauen, who by eſpouſing their Child was growne to be heyre as it were vnto them; they might run more lightly the way of his commandements, & in a holy freedome frō worldly ſolicitudes ſpend, & end the remainder of their life in gayning to themſelues heauenly treaſures eternally to enrich them: wherein they became animated af-

ter-

terwards by the rare example of their daughters vertues; who ouer-ioyed at firſt with their leaue ſo obtayned, and freed from former feares of worldly entanglements, daily extended herſelfe to courſes of ſanctity and perfection by frequent and feruent practiſes of humility, and punctuall obedience to her holy Father, permitted by her Parents freely vnto her.

So as now a corner neere his Cell where she might frequently viſit him, and de-

lightfully drawe, through her eares to her ſoule, the vitall breath of his heauenly diſcourſes, was in the day tyme her delightfulleſt mā-ſion: and watching whole nights in the Church, kneeling or proſtrate before the Aultar, when extreme wearines and deadly ſleep did not poſſeſſe her, was to be as in her ſpouſes bed-chāber, raiſed by amourous thoghts of his wonderfull Perfe-ctions, and rapt with pure delights, freshly euery day communicated vnto her. So

as

as to heare him only named cauſed a iubily in her ſoule, by blushing and teares to ſuch as beheld her ſweetely diſcouered.

And as internall guifts did wõderfully adorne her; ſo were not externall graces wanting vnto her: for her face was matchles in bewty and by a rare modeſty exceedingly graced. Her ſpeach was ſweet, neuer but leaſurely and wiſely vttered. The comly ſtature likewiſe and proportion of her body in all parts thereof, though

poorely clad ſerued to grace her in the eyes of others; ſo as the Diuell emulating thoſe high beginnings of ſanctity in her, and fearing withall what her example might worke in tyme, for the drawing of others to like courſes of Perfection, he ceaſed not to lay many ſnares to intrappe her, and with new temptations rayſed by others for her greater merit & glory at laſt, inceſſantly to try her; the beginning of which shall in my next Chapter be declared.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

How S. Wenefride *was found alone by the* Kings *ſonne in her Fathers houſe; and in daunger to haue byn violated by him, eſcaped towards the Church, and was in the way cruelly beheaded for conſtantly refuſing to yield her pure body vnto him.*

S. *Beuno* hauing fully ended the fabrique of his Church, and conſecrated the ſame to Chriſt, was daily

visited by great multitudes of such as dwelled in places neere him; & amongst them *S. VVinefreds* holy Parents, neuer fayled in his sacrifices and sermons to heare him; so as on a sunday whilst they were in the Church, & their daughter by some needfull, or charitable occasion, contrary to her custome, detained at home, Prince *Cradocus*, king *Alan* his sonne, with a lustful wicked purpose entred the house, pretending that he came to speake with the Lord *Theuith* her Father.

The Holy Maid, ſuſpecting no worſe of him at firſt, after courteous ſalutatiõs paſſed betweene them, and excuſes by her humbly made, of being alone, vnattired, and vnable in her Parents abſence fitly to intertayne him as his Princely dignity required, intreated him with all, to repoſe himſelfe in a more conuenient roome of the houſe, till after diuine ſeruice ended, her Father should returne, and be free to ſpeake with him. To which ſimple

candor and plainenes of her ſpeaches gracefully vttered, the Prince infuriated with loue of her faire perſon, and luſtfull deſires preſently to inioy her, replyed, that he would willingly expect the returne of her Parents, if herſelfe in meane time wold be pleaſed to conſent vnto his will, ſo deuoted vnto her that for the fauour then expected from her, he would according to his Birth, and Power, euer afterwardes be ready to honour and ſerue her: threatning withall, pre-

ſently to rauish her, if she yielded not willingly to his motion.

The holy Virgin though trembling for feare, & blushing at the immodeſty of his ſpeaches, yet loſt not her wits in ſo needfull an occaſion; but preſent with herſelfe, & diuinely alſo at that inſtant aſſiſted, she humbly and patiẽtly anſwered him, that she doubted not of enioying honour, wealth, and worldly contentment by being eſpowſed to ſo Princely a perſon: but becauſe (ſaid

she) the preſent poore attire wherein you haue ſo on the ſodaine taken me, ſuiteth not to ſo high a motion, or indeed beſeemeth your preſéce, giue me leaue, I beſeech you, to enter my chamber heere by, preſently to alter it.

To which her requeſt (albeit with ſome loathnes to be delayed in his purpoſe) he yielded his conſent: ſo that she now finding herſelf in her chamber, freed out of his hands, and hopeles of any reſcue or ſuccour to be

otherwiſe affoarded her, ran out by a backe way, as faſt as she could, towards the Church, where her Father and his people would, she doubted not, be able to ſaue her. But he impatient in his deſires, and ſuſpecting indeed that which happened, brake into the roome, and finding her not there, purſued her ſo haſtely in her flight, as on a hill ſide neere the Church he furiouſly apprehended her, vowing with his ſword drawne in his hand, & a countenance full

of wrathful indignation that if forthwith she consented not to his will, so full of honourable loue towards her, he would strike of that head from her body, & deforme that face therein, which formerly he had loued.

Whereunto the holy Virgin (as another. *S. Agnes* to her carnall Louer) vndauntedly replyed, that she had holily espowsed herselfe, & that also with her Parents consent, to the king of Heauens sonne, in power, beauty, and goodnes incompara-

bly

bly exceeding him; and vpon his experienced loue towards her, she would euer remaine to him so faythfully, constantly, and vnalteredly deuoted in the affections of her hart, as she wold gladly loose her head and life, for refusing to admit any corriuall togeather with him. Neither shall your terrours (said she) or threats draw me from the sweetnes of his Loue, or make me not go, as I haue promised, purely vnto him.

Whereupon he, in a furious

rious ſcorne to be ſlighted ſo by her, & knowing withall that whilſt she liued the vehemẽcy of his loue could not be aſſwaged, gaue her with his ſword ſo deadly a ſtroake on the neck, as her head thereby and body became inſtantly parted; the body falling without the Church dore, and the head within it; ſo as the floore therof being ſomewhat declining, as built in the hanging of a hill, it tumbled towards the people, kneeling togeather before the

Aultar,

Aultar, astonishing them with the sight thereof no lesse, thē afterwards it made them worthily to wonder, in seeing a cleere and plentifull spring newly then beginning to run out of the ground in the same place, where her head had first fallen vpon; visited since that time by holy pilgrimes from places farre & neere, and by miraculous graces, and cures frequently affoarded to sickely, and grieued persons, famously renowned.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

The lamentations made at S. Wenefrids *death, aſwell by the people as by her Parents; how likewiſe* S. Beuno *procured by his prayers a dreadfull reuenge of her death vpon the Author thereof glorying in his cruelty: and then putting the head & body togeather, ſought to obteyne of God, her returne to life againe.*

THE people moued with ſo dolefull a ſpe-

ctacle, as was the virgins head, bloud, and body, before them, ceaſed not with out-cryes to expreſſe their griefe and anger togeather towards him that committed ſo haynous an outrage. Her Parents likewiſe called by their cryes to the place, lamented the loſſe of their holy ſweet child, lying butchered ſo villainouſly, and vnexpectedly before them, with more then imaginable expreſsions of ſorrow.

S. Beuno in like manner, now ready to celebrate, lea-

uing the aultar, and approachinge to the doore, was wholy dissolued into teares of compassion and griefe to behold his deare Pupill and child, lying so cruelly murdered, before her consecration to Christ, solemnly soone after by him intended: and beholding in this his griefe, her Murderer standing proudly by, & wiping his bloudy sword on the grasse, so far from repenting him of the deed, without feare of God or man, as he gloried proudly therein,

with the holy virgins head in his hand he went towards him; and looking him in the face, ſaid vnto him.

Thou wicked man, for as much, as without regard of innocency or beauty, thou haſt murdered a Princely Virgin, no leſſe noble then thy ſelfe, and art not, as thou oughteſt to be, ſorry aſwell for the horrible ſacriledge, as foule murder heere committed deteſtably by thee; I do heere beſeech, my heauenly Lord, for the example of others at leaſt,

to execute presently, his dredfull Iudgment against thee who hast murdered his spouse, troubled his people, violated his Saboath, and besprinkled with bloud this holy House, to his honour and seruice consecrated by me.

And the effect of his words, to the terrour and wonder of all present, was such, as the Prince fell dead sudaynely before him; and which increased the astonishment of the people, his dead body was presently ei-

ther ſwallowed vp by the earth, or taken away by Diuels, ſo as no ſigne thereof afterwards appeared.

This done, *S. Beuno* often kiſſing the virgins dead face, and bathing it with his teares, put it to her body, & coueringe them with his cloake, after he had breathed in her mouth, prepared himſelfe to goe to the Aultar, warning the people and her Parents eſpecially, to ceaſe their lamentations, & conuert thē into prayers to the Creatour of ſoules, &

the ſole rayſer of bodies after death, that he would be mercifully pleaſed, as he called *Lazarus* to a new life rotten before, and ſtincking in his graue; ſo to rayſe this Princely Spouſe heere butchered for her loue towards him: and this chiefly for the glory of himſelfe, edification of his people, and comfort of her parents, who ſo freely before had dedicated her, in purity of life perpetually to ſerue him.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

How S. Wenefride *was rayſed from death to life, and her Head reunited to her body by* S. Beuno's *prayers, with a ſmall white circle remayning in the place of her Necke where it was cut; & other wonders gracing ſtil the place of her Martyrdome.*

AFter the holy mã had ended his Maſſe, and the people their prayers, lifting vp his hands towards heauen, he prayed in this

manner : O Lord Iesus-Christ, for whose sake this holy Virgin contemned the world, and coueted heauenly things; vouchsafe by the tender bowels of thy mercy, loue, and bounty, to graunt vs the effect of our vowes now made, & prayers offered heere humbly vnto thee : and albeit we are fully persuaded, that this Godly Virgin who liued holily, & dyed constantly for thee, be now highly exalted in heauen also with thee, wanting no more the society of vs

mortall & miſerable Creatures; yet to manifeſt thyne Omnipotency, and that ſupreme dominiõ which thou haſt ouer ſoules and bodies, neuer dead to thy power of rayſing & reuniting them; for the greater merit alſo of her ſoule, whoſe body heere lyeth before vs, we craue a new life for her, and that she may returne, after a long & plentifull harueſt, of new merits heere gayned, more enriched & diuinely beautified vnto thee, the beloued of her Hart, and Eternall

ſpouſe, who with the Father and the holy Ghoſt, doeſt rule in earth, and raigne in heauen, for euer and euer.

And when the people had cryed with great deuotion, *Amen* vnto his prayer, the Virgin as newly wakened from ſleep, wiped her eyes & face, beſmeared with ſweat and duſt before, as hauing tumbled on the ground, filling all preſent, and her Parents there amongſt them, with ioy and admiration; obſeruing alſo, as they more fixedly beheld her, a pure

white

white circle, no bigger then a ſmall threed, to remayne in her faire Necke, ſhewing the place where it had ben cut off before, and was miraculouſly then to her body conioyned; which becauſe it euer afterwards remayned cõſpicuouſly ſeene after the ſame manner, *Brewa*, her name before, is ſaid to haue ben changed by the peoples great veneration, and loue towards her, into *VVenefride* by *VVen*, which doth ſignify *white* in the old British tongue, added vnto it, & 2.

letters thereof, for better found quite altered. And in many apparitions of her to men, and women after her second corporall death, authentically recounted, this white Circle in her necke conspicuously appeared; to giue worldly soules thereby to vnderstand, the particular glory which she had receaued of her heauẽly spouse for suffering that wound, so constantly for him.

And whereas the valley where she was martyred, had ben called euer before a

dry

dry or barren bottome, it was for the Chriſtall fountayne of pure waters, breaking miraculouſly out of the ground where her head firſt fell, called afterwards in memory of this miracle, *Finhon*, which in old Welsh doth ſignify a fountayne or well: & indeed as this fountayne was wonderfull in the firſt origen therof, ſo did the ſame by miraculous cures of men & beaſts, either bathed in that water, or drinking therof, become famouſly afterwards, renowned.

In

In memory likewiſe, that ſtore of the Virgins pure bloud had ben ſpilt in that place, and to ſignify withall how ſweet a Sacrifice was offered there by her; the ſtones of the Well, are either dyed, or ſpotted all ouer with drops, as it were, of bloud; and the moſſe growing about it, is, as with muske yet to this day ſweetly perfumed.

The miracle of her rayſing frõ death to life diuulged in thoſe partes, gayned to *S. Beuno* ſo great a fame of

his ſingular ſanctity, and power with God to obteyne any thing, that multitudes thereupon of Gentil people in thoſe dayes, for their inſtruction in the Chriſtian fayth and Baptiſme, repayred vnto him: whoſe famous acts, and *S. VVenefrids* holy life after her being rayſed, ſhall in the reſt of this booke be briefly declared.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

How S. Wenefride *was solemnly veyled by* S. Beuno, *and fully instructed in the true knowledge & holy practise of a Religious life. How likewise he tooke his leaue afterwards of her, prophetically fortelling the sanctity of her life, and her gayning to Christ of many soules.*

S. *Wenefride*, as another *Lazarus* restored to a new life, with a fresh feruour of heauenly loue and

deuo-

deuotion, applyed herſelfe to learne from ſo great a maiſter as *S. Beuno* was, how to rayſe her already-illuminated ſoule to the height of Religious Perfection, chooſing for that purpoſe to ſit at the Saints feet, as *S. Mary Magdalen* did at the feet of our Sauiour, neuer ſatiated with the delicacies, which fell from that heauenly Table vnto her, by his moſt pious ſpeaches, and deuout inſtructiõs; & within a ſmal tyme out a reſtles and moſt amorous deſire, fully to be

vnited to her louely and diuine Spouſe, she obteyned of him (as profeſſed Virgins were wont to be, in thoſe primitiue tymes of Gods church) to be ſolēnly veiled, her ſingular vertues & graces ſupplying the wāt of yeares, for that Religious ceremony Canonically required.

The Saint therefore deſirous to affoard her that comfort, and knowing her to be very worthy therof, called her Parēts vnto him, to acquaint them with his

intent of giuing vnto her the holy veyle of Chaſtity with their approbation and conſent: which they, as deuout & godly perſons, with all humble reſpects vnto him the Author of her ſecond life, and with imbracings of their holy Child, moſt gladly agreed vnto; & which was afterwards in a great aſſembly of people moſt ſolemnely, and religiouſly performed.

After which bleſſing by her obteyned, the holy man as diuinely foreknowing, to

what an height of ſanctity & perfection the ſpirit of God, for the glory of himſelfe & good of others, intended to raiſe her, ſought more and more to illuminate her ſoule by heauenly documents, & practicall leſſons, for the direction of herſelfe, & others in a ſpirituall and Religious life; which she as a very apt ſcholler did not only learne, but practiſe alſo in ſuch a manner, that the Saint was ouerioyed to behould her.

And finally finding her fully enabled not only to

guide herſelfe, but others alſo, in courſes of Perfection, he called her Parents one day vnto him, and tould them, that as they had liberally graunted vnto him a Church, and houſe for the ſeruice of God, and help of his ſeruants: ſo had his diuine Maieſty liberally requited their Charity towards him, by ſingular graces affoarded to them, and eſpecially to their Childe, whom now they might well chooſe, and propoſe vnto themſelues, as a Miſtreſſe

able to guide them in their Redeemers seruice, and as a bright shining patterne of religious Perfection. Wherfore being diuinely called to another place, I must heere (said he) leaue you to the helpes of Heauenly Graces, which will not be wanting vnto you, persisting as now you do holily in Gods seruice, and to the carefull direction of your Daughter.

And then, conuerting himselfe to *S. VVenefride*: Our Lord (said he) deare

Child,

Child, hath appointed you to ſucceed me heere in my holy labours, and abiding in theſe parts, to go onwards happily your ſelf, & to guide others fruitfully, in the way to eternall life, as hitherto I haue taught you. And doubt not, but by the mouing example of your death for him already ſuſteyned, and the holy conuerſation of your life, you wilbe able to performe what I haue ſaid; and in this very place, gather togeather for your heauenly ſpouſe, many pure

and deuout Virgins, guided vnto him holily by you.

But know withall, that you shal not heere end your dayes, but that after ſeauen yeares, in prayer and pennance ſpent in this place, to your owne great Merit, & ſingular edification of others, our gracious Lord will call you to another, that ſtrangers alſo may in the knowledge and true ſeruice of him be illuminated by you: and know alſo that heerby your memory shall become glorious in future

ages,

ages, and your merits published to the whole world, by miraculous cures, & helpes affoarded vnto sickly, and distressed persons praying vnto you.

CHAP. VIII.

Wherein is declared S. Wenefrides *griefe for her Holy Fathers departure, and his comfortable ſpeaches vnto her, concerning particular Graces intended by God towards herſelfe, and others by her.*

THe Godly Virgin being exceſſiuely grieued at her holy Fathers departure, he to cõfort her in ſo deep an affliction, tooke her by the right hand, and

lead

lead her to the fountayne which miraculouſly had riſen in the tyme, & place of her martyrdome, & ſitting togeather vpõ a ſtone neere to the ſide of the well, called therefore to this day *S. Beuno's* ſtone: You ſee (ſaid he) heere the monumẽt of your ſufferings, and behold alſo the ſtones therein ſteyned as with your bloud, shed for your Heauenly Spouſes ſake; be you therfore now attentiue, and mindfull of what I ſhall fore-tell you concerning three eſpeciall

Graces, whereby your Glorious ſpouſe Chriſt Ieſus wil heerafter honour your ſelfe, and benefit others by you.

The firſt of them is, that theſe ſaid Stones, ſhall neuer be washed from their bloudy ſteynes, but euer retayne the ſame, as triumphant ſignes, and glorious teſtimonies of your bloud, in defence of your Chaſtity moſt gratefully heere effuſed.

The ſecond shalbe, that neuer any perſon who shall deuoutely aske any

tempo-

temporall bleſſing, as freedom aſwell from corporall as ſpirituall diſtreſſes, to be obteyned by your merits & prayers for them, but that in three times ſo doing they shall aſſuredly be made partakers of their deſire; or paſſing by death out of this life, they shall in another world reap after a more ample manner the fruit of their prayers, by heauenly bleſſings, through your interceſsions for them, diuinely prepared.

The third shalbe, that af-

ter my departure now from you, into a remote part of this Iland, God will giue me a Cell neere the ſea shore, & when you would ſend any letters, or tokens vnto me (as his diuine Maieſty wold haue you to do, and I alſo do intreate the ſame of you once at leaſt euery year) caſt them only in the ſtreame of this fountayne, and they will, paſſing into the Ocean by many creekes, and turning-shores, be diuinely, & ſafely directed vnto me: which graces likewiſe to the

worlds

worlds end shall be diuulged glorioufly of you.

And hauing ended this his ſpeach, he led her backe againe vnto the Church, and ſaid then vnto her: Behould heere this Church, & lodgings about it, which hauing byn built by the charitable magnificence of your parents, and my labours, I leaue vnto you, to be conuerted into a copious monaſtery of Chaſt, & Deuout Virgins, who moued by your inſtruction, & holy example of life, ſhall to-

gea-

geather with your ſelfe, meritoriouſly practiſe thoſe heauenly documẽts, which, by a perfit contempt of the world, and a full abnegation of thẽſelues (the two maine grounds of Religious perfection) I haue often deliuered by my ſpeaches vnto you.

Stupendious miracles alſo done for the temporall & eternall good of many, repayring to this very place, ſhall heerafter be effected, to the prayſe of their heauenly Maker, and euen bruit beaſts ſhall not want

their share in ſuch bleſſings; ſtriue therfore, deare Child to exhibit your ſelfe in all things, as a liuely patterne, and example to others of all Vertue. As for my poore ſelfe, I ſhall goe whither Gods ſpirit will guide me, & euer retayne in my hart and ſoule, a Fatherly and louing memory of you.

CHAP.

CHAP. IX.

Of the continuance of S. Wenefrides *griefe for the departure of* S. Beuno; *and how he tooke lastly his leaue of her. VVho beginning afterwards to practise what he had taught her, gathered many Noble mens daughters vnto her, and liued in eminent sanctity, as Gouernesse of the rest.*

THE more *S. Beuno* did seeke by sweete speaches to comfort his louing

louing Child, the more was her griefe for his abſence increaſed, eſpecially when she ſaw him with his ſtaffe in his hand ready to go from her, ſweetly venting her ſorrows in ſuch ſort as others might heare her, ſpeaking thus vnto him,

Now holy Father am I to be lelft alone, as a poore Orphane Child without a Nurſe, or as a ſilly sheep amõg rauenous wolues without a Paſtour to defend me; wheras with you I was moſt ſafe, alwayes ioyfull in your

preſence, alwayes edified by your example, & inſtructed by your ſpeaches. Which words of hers, together with her flowing teares ſo moued the Saint himſelfe, as alſo her louing Parents, and others that were preſent, as not to haue their owne ſorrow, by ſtaying longer with her, increaſed, after he had bleſſed her with his hand, (as hauing no toũg through griefe to ſpeake a word more vnto her) haſtned his pace faſter then modeſty would permit her to follow him,

vntill

vntill at length he was gon quite out of her ſight, neuer more in this world to behold him; ſo that returning with her companiõs homeward, for many dayes after she remayned in her ſorrow, till tyme at length, & diſcret thoughts hauing eaſed her hart, she wiſely and maturely, began to reflect vpon his heauenly diſcourſes and leſſons formerly giuen vnto her, both how she might practiſe them her ſelfe, and draw others alſo to the exerciſe therof.

Which in a short tyme, Gods grace and the force of her holy Example, did so happily effect, that a great number of Noble and deuout Virgins, trampling worldly wealth, Honours & pleasures vnder their feet, for the glory and seruice of Christ, betooke themselues to her gouernment, & liued in religious discipline holily vnder her; commanding or teaching them nothing but what herselfe practised first amongst them, as a shining cleere Light, in safe

paths of ſanctity, to guide them; yea with ſuch a ſweet mildenes, & motherly loue towards them, that with equall merit, and contentment they obeyed her commands, and obſerued ſuch rules as she had eſtablished amongſt them.

Her wholſome aduiſes alſo they receaued as heauēly oracles; & ſuch remedies as in their difficulties, & temptations she wiſely & compaſſionably gaue them, had a heauenly kind of force preſently to free them. Mi-

racles likewise were not sometymes wanting to increase her authority, and to testify her sanctity vnto them; so that their respect and loue towards her, caused all to striue who should excell in imitating the rare vertues, which daily more and more they discouered in her holy example of life, beeing as a sweet odour, wherby perfect soules come to draw others vnto Christ with them.

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

Of the Fame, and effects of S. Wenefrides *ſanctity of life in numbers of ſoules gayned vnto Chriſt by her. Of the firſt guift alſo which ſhe ſent miraculouſly to* S. Beuno.

THE wonderfull fame of *S. VVenefrids* ſanctity, increaſed alſo by miraculous cures, vpon perſons diſeaſed done frequently & apparently by her, was not contayned within the limits only of the country where

she dwelt, but far and neere againſt her will, began to be ſo diuulged, from very remoteplaces of the kingdom; ſo as many flocked to ſee, & ſpeake with her, and were ſo edified by her Angelicall behauiour, & wiſe ſpeaches vnto them, that they were very loath to leaue her cõpany, and accounted thoſe people bleſſed who liued, alwayes neere her.

But moſt of all the holy Virgins that were placed vnder her care, & domeſtical gouerment, reputed them-

ſelues

ſelues happy, by hauing for their Guide, no leſſe tender a Mother in her deare loue towards them, then a wiſe miſtreſſe by inſtruction and example holily to direct them, as her holy Father had formerly taught her; towards whome during her life, she euer retayned a moſt gratefull memory of her preſent life, and a thouſand bleſſings beſides receaued from him. In particular alſo she forgot not the yearely token she had promiſed to ſend him.

Wherefore partly with her owne hands, and partly by the help of her ſiſters, ſhe had imbrodered a faire veſtemét to ſend vnto him, and hauing in the beginning of the month of May, almoſt a yeare after his departure, finiſhed the ſame, wrapping it vp in a wollen cloath, ſhe went with her ſiſters, & many others to the welsſide, where caſting it into the water, ſhe ſaid; O holy Father I ſend heere according to your command & my promiſe, this ſmal token

of

of my loue vnto you.

The which, to the great wõder of many viewing the same, as it passed by the well streame downe into the Riuer, and so into the sea, remayned dry, and no whit moistned by the water: So that in a short tyme, being diuinely directed, it was cast on the shoare 50. miles off hard by the Monastery, where the holy man liued, and he casually going forth tooke it vp, wõdring at first what it should be, till at length opening the bundle

and

and remẽbring his charge giuen to *S. VVenefride* before his departure, he ioyfully conceaued it to be her guift, gratefully mindfull of his loue towards her; and ioyed therein much more afterwards, when the wonderfull ſanctity, and fruites of her life were reuealed vnto him; as she alſo diuinely knew that he had ſafely receaued it.

The veſtment he ordayned to be kept carefully in the Church, for the vſe of himſelfe and his Brethren,

to celebrate holy masse in; & renuing often by the sight therof, his wonted loue and prayers for her, he became in them illuminated againe, and prophetically assured, that her owne graces should be eminent, and the fruites very great which by her holy life, & exãple to the glory of God, & good of others, should be wrought, both where she liued, and in many other places, as formerly he had byn inspired to tell her.

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

Of the great Talents which Christ gaue vnto S. Wenefride *for the good of others; and how she yearely remembred to send her token to* S. Beuno, *vntill, to her great griefe, she had his holy end reuealed vnto her; soone after which, she changed the place of her aboad, as he had foretold her.*

ALbeit many Graces were worthily admired in his holy Virgin, by

those

thoſe who knew, and conuerſed with her, as her high & laſting vnion with God in extaticall prayer, her great auſterity, her Angelicall purity and innocency of life, her powerfull authority in commanding her ſubiects, with admirable humility and ſweetnes conioyned; yet nothing was more wonderfull in her, then the deep knowledge of heauenly verityes, and ardent zeale of her Creatours glory, ſtill manifeſted in her exhortatiõs to her owne ſubiects, &

ſpeaches to ſtrangers that came to viſit her; ſo as she did fill their harts more with enflamed deſires to ſerue Almighty God, then their eares with the ſound of her wordes: euer attributing the graces of her ſoule firſt to Chriſt, & next to *S. Beuno* his Great ſeruãt and her Teacher, to whome she euery yeare ſent her promiſed token, or preſent after the manner aforeſaid, vntill his holy death, and circumſtances thereof were reuealed vnto her; whoſe

losse she frequently afterwards deplored, albeit she had ben diuinely assured, that according to his wonderfull merits heere on earth, he was in heauenly ioyes, highly exalted: the particulars of whose holy life from his Childhood till his death, and great miracles afterwards, are authentically recorded in his yet extant and certaine monuments.

After whose glorious discease, she began to feele most perfect desires in her-

ſelfe, for the greater glory of God and benefit of ſoules in other places, to remoue from the monaſtery where she liued, eſpecially now ſeeing her ſiſters well able to liue holily & religiouſly without her. So that in the end of the ſeauenth yeare of her gouerment, as the Saint had foretold her, she tooke leaue of her ſpirituall Children, Parentes, and other friends there abouts, all afflicted aboue meaſure, at the loſſe of her gratefull, & profitable preſence amongſt

them;

them; and togeather with one of her companions intended to goe whither the ſpirit of God should be pleaſed to direct her: viſitting alſo deuoutly before her departure, the place of her owne martyrdome, & there proſtrate on her knees, in hũble & feruent prayer she beſought Almighty God, that he would according to his bleſſed will, direct her in that iourney for his honour intended, and to increaſe withall his bleſſings vpon ſuch as frequented

that place, in a deuout memory of her martyrdome there for him ſuſteyned; the which effect of her prayer was by his diuine Maieſty accordingly graũted as hath ben teſtified ſince by numberleſſe miracles wrought at that Well, or Fountaine, in curing the bodily & ſpirituall infirmities of all hũble Clients and ſuppliants in that place vnto her.

CHAP.

CHAP. XII.

How S. Wenefrid *was directed by God in her iourney to a holy mă called* Deifer, *whose Counsell she was willed to follow: of whom many things are by the Author occasionally heere recounted; and how worthy he was to be chosen by God, for* S. Wenefrides *Directour in the place of* S. Beuno.

S. *VVenefride* hauing in earneſt prayer recommẽded her iourney to God,

was inſpired to goe with her companion, to one *Deifer* a holy Man, liuing at *Botauar*, who should further direct her. This man was indeed, for his Sanctity in thoſe dayes, & miraculous teſtimonies therof, famouſly renowned; for by his prayers he had raiſed out of the ground a goodly ſpring in a place that was dry before, & obteyned likewiſe of God, that the water thereof should haue a ſupernaturall force to cure all ſoares & diſeaſes of ſuch as did drinke

therof, or wash their ſoares therewith.

And amongſt many miracles beſides recounted of him whilſt he liued, this one performed after his death is eſpecially renowned, to wit, of two Theeues who hauing ſtolne two horſes out of his Churchyard, poſted with them moſt ſpeedily out of the Coũtrey: but the next day the owners finding thẽ gone, humbly proſtrated themſelues before the Saintes Aultar, and preſented therat two Candels for the

recouery of their horſes, beſeeching him to accept of thé vnlighted as they were, ſince they had no fire there preſent to kindle them.

This faithfull piety of theirs ſo pleaſed the Saint, that the Candels were vpon the ſuddayne miraculouſly lighted to teſtify that he graciouſly heard them: & the theeues after they had ridde their horſes as they thought far from the place found themſelues brought backe againe vnto it, & that not once but the ſecond

tyme alſo; ſo as the men hauing prayed there all night, early in the morning as they came out of the Church, they very ioyfully ſaw their horſes, held by two ſtrangers wholy confounded at their theft: wherfore they gladly ſeizing on them, & humbly thanking the Saint by whoſe merits they had obteyned that bleſſing, they diſmiſſed alſo the theeues for his ſake, without inflicting any punishment (as their fault deſerued) vpon them. Which miracle I haue

purpoſely heere recounted, that my Reader may know the merits & great ſanctity of bleſſed *Deifer*, to whom *S. VVenefride*, for the knowledge of her iourney, was diuinely directed.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIII.

How S. Wenefride *came to the Holy man* Deifer, *and after she had bin charitably welcommed, and entertayned by him for one night, she was the next morning sent, for a further direction, to another Saint called* Saturnus, *dwelling at* Henthlant.

THe holy Virgin after due inquiry made, where the Village *Botauar* stood, and of her way vnto it, committing to God her

mona-

Monaſtery at *Finbon*, and friends there about, began with her companion cherefully her iourney towards Bleſſed *Deifers* Cell, eight miles diſtant; where at her arriuall, she was by the Saint charitably welcommed; and hauing related the cauſe of her comming, and how she had byn diuinely in her prayer, directed vnto him, he tould her that concerning either herſelfe, or her iourney, God had not as then reuealed any thing vnto him: But haue patience

(ſaid

(ſaid he) a little this night, to ſtay heere at my cell, and his diuine maieſty the whilſt will vouchſafe perchance to reueale his holy pleaſure vnto me.

Whereunto she humbly and thankefully agreed, as being confidently aſſured, that Almighty God had not vainely, and to no purpoſe, directed her vnto him.

The Saint, as his manner was, praying the whole night, a heauenly voyce towards the morning ſaying thus vnto him; Tell *VVene-*

fride

fride my Virginall deare Daughter, that she goe forthwith to a village called *Henthlant* where she shall be partly satisfyed in her desire, for there she shal find a Venerable man called *Saturnus*, by whome she shall be more fully instructed, about the place of her aboad during life, and what she shall do in it.

So that early in the morning *S. Deifer* calling the holy Virgin his guest, concealed nothing of what had ben reuealed vnto him, and

directing her the way towards *Saturnus* his Cell, willed her cheerefully to goe on; for that holy neighbour of mine (*ſaid he*) will be diuinely enabled to tell you, not only of your iourney, and place to goe vnto, but of other things alſo, belonging to you.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIV.

How Saturnus *entertayned* S. Wenefride *in his Cell, and telling her, how much* God *should be honoured by her, he directed her to a holy place called* Guitherin, *where she should find one* Elerius, *a Bleſſed Abbot of religious men to direct her, and a monaſtery of chaſt Virgins, who would gladly ſubmit themſelues vnto her.*

S. *VVenefride* much reioycing at the direction

which

which Bleſſed *Deifer* had giuen her, and confirmed in her comfortable perſuaſion that Chriſt the Author of her iourney, would not in his care and protection be wanting vnto her, humbly and thanckfully tooke her leaue of him, and went on forwards with her companiõ towards *Henthlant* where *Saturnus* remayned.

Comming thither she was moſt charitably receaued by him, as hauing bin, concerning herſelfe and her iourney, before hand diui-

nely instructed; and causing her to remayne that night in prayer, and holy conferences with him, he gaue vnto her (to her great comfort) many heauenly & holy lessons, and towards the morning he tould her, that their was a place, not far off called *Guitherin*, stored with the pretious reliques of many Saints who had formerly liued there, in great holines of life, and deerenes vnto God, blessing the place for them; and for that cause greatly reuerenced by de-

uout

uout people repayring vnto it. This place (ſaid he) is deſtined by God for your earthly habitation, and to be ſanctified more by you; where alſo you ſhall find a holy Abbot called *Elerius*, of ſo great mortification, prayer, & vnion with God, as the world, and all contentments therof are wholy dead vnto him.

To this Man then am I willed to ſend you, and to tell you with all, that you ſhall find there a heauenly tranquillity of mind, and a

Monaſtery of chaſt Virgins, trayned vp from their Infancy in vertue, liuing alſo now holily togeather, yet ordeyned by God to be rayſed by your holy Example and Inſtructions to higher and perfecter wayes of gayning ſanctity and religious perfection; and they will in time, for that end, humbly and gladly be ready to ſubmit themſelues vnto you, as to a Mother and Abbeſſe, ſent by their Heauenly ſpouſe purpoſly vnto them.

CHAP.

CHAP. XV.

How S. Wenefride *going to* Elerius, *was in the way, ſaluted moſt charitably by him; how alſo after they had ſpent a whole night in prayer togeather, she was led by him to the monaſtery of Virgins, and there after high prayſes vttered of her, she was commended as a companion diuinely ſent vnto them.*

S. *Wenefride* replenished with incredible ioy at *Saturnus* ſpeaches vnto her,

especially in hearing how holy a place she was going vnto, and that she should find there a Monastery of chast virgins to liue withal, desired to know of him the way thitherward, crauing withall his holy blessing for the better speed of her iourney.

The Holy man, guiding her himselfe some part of the way, for the great reuerence he bare towards her, after he had giuen her his blessing, caused his Deacon to accompany her through-

out the whole iourney to *Elerius*, who being diuinely forewarned of her comming, and all other particulars of her life, met her for honours sake vpon the way, and after he had led her into the Church, and prayed a while with her, he imbraced her in a fatherly louing manner, bidding her be of good comfort: for, said he, (taking her a part from the Deacon, and her Companion) I haue already diuinely vnderstood of your noble Virginity, with other

gracefull ſignes of your martyrdome, in the place thereof yet remayning, and will be gladly ready to help you, in the cauſe of your iourney vnto me.

Whereunto *S. VVenefride* replyed, that she had nothing more concerning herſelfe to tell him, but that as she had ben by Gods holy ſpirit guided vnto him, ſo would she be hũbly ready to receaue his further directions, and be in the future courſe of her life an obedient Child, and Schol-

ler vnto him.

The Saint by this her humble and modeſt anſwere being exceedingly edified, tould her, that they would if she pleaſed, ſpend that night in holy prayer togeather, for their ſurer direction, in ſo important an occaſion: and he hauing receaued towards the morning, new illuminatiõs from heauen about her, replenished with exceſſiue ioy, he roſe from his prayer, and hartily imbracing her, willed her to be confident, that God

would not be wanting in the wonted effects, and gracious increaſing of his Fatherly loue towards her; & ſo leading her out of the Church to the Monaſtery of Virgins gouerned by him, he made this ſpeach vnto them.

Deare Children of God, reioyce, for that your heauenly ſpouſe hath ſent a new ſtar of wonderful brightnes to shine heere among you, & prouided ſuch a companiõ for you, as wil with new treaſures of merited graces

enrich

enrich her owne ſoule, and yours alſo by the many rare examples, and high practiſes of religious Perfection, which from tyme to tyme she will exhibit profitably, and holily vnto you.

For this is *VVenefride* that renowned Virgin, whome you haue heard to haue ſuffered a glorious death, for her virginity defẽded. This is she, whoſe Triumphs are ſung in Churches, and her Trophies do yet illuſtrate the whole Prouince which she dwelled in. This is she

who in her martyrdom and Confeſſion, is equally glorious, and now is come to liue holily, and to dye happily amongſt you, as hauing already a high place amõgſt the moſt glorious Martyrs of heauen reſerued for her.

Reioyce therefore worthily at her fortunate arriuall, and keep ſafely ſo heauenly a Treaſure amongſt you. Marke well and imitate diligently the rare example of her life: forget not likewiſe thoſe heauenly leſſons which she will giue you, out

of a holy desire, to leade you, with herselfe vnto the height of religious merit & perfection; for which only reason Christ hath sent her to increase also the already renowned glory of this place, by liuing heere amongst you.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVI.

Of the commendation which the Saint made of S. Wenefride *to the old Abbesse of the Monastery; and how she quickly there deserued his prayses by her eminent, and heroicall Vertues.*

S. *Elerius* hauing spoken so much of her sanctity generally to all the sisters of the Monastery togeather, conuerted his speach vnto the Venerable old Abbesse called *Theonia*, a very holy

wo-

woman, saying thus vnto her.

To you, most deare Mother, I recommend especially the respectfull entertaynement of this sacred and deare spouse of Christ, sent (as I say once againe) diuinely vnto you, wherby you may gather how highly she is to be honored by you; & ioy withall that the Author of all graces hath in sending her hither so louingly regarded you: & with this he departed, leauing *S. Wenefrid* amongst them, who suitably

to his high prayſes, began to shine in her wonderfull perfections, and by heroicall acts of vertue to infuſe a new Charity amongſt thé, eaſily by all diſcerned, & by the Abbeſſe eſpecially, who was no raw beginner in regular and holy courſes.

Her abſtinence (they noted) was admirable, her prayer cõtinuall when charitable occaſions interrupted not the ſame, & very often extaticall; a profound Humility in all her geſtures and ſpeaches plainely ap-

peared,

peared, neuer prayſing herſelfe, and ſenſibly troubled when others for any thing did extoll her. Patience the firſt fruite of Charity, as *S. Paul* reckoneth it, ſeemed to haue poſſeſſed ſo fully her hart, and ſo firmely ſetled the affections thereof, as all Anger, Enuy, and other diſordinate Paſſions of that kind were wholy dead vnto her.

Her Commands had euer ſuch ſweetnes and diſcretion conioyned, as it delighted all the other to do whatſoe-

uer she, at *Theonia's* intreaty commanded them, especially when they noted herselfe in hard offices to goe before them. And when she spake either of sacred Verities or of vertuous Practises vnto them, the feeling feruour of diuine loue flamed not only in her soule, but a great depth of heauẽly wisedome appeared plainely in her words also, & wrought the like effects in such as heard them; so as Reuerence and Loue were quickly by all yielded vnto her.

Theonia the Abbeſſe alſo as more illuminated, to know, and delight in her graces, did often confer priuately with her, alwayes learning at ſuch tymes new leſſons of ſanctity from her. And ſeldome did they ſo conferre togeather of ſacred Miſteryes, Ioyfull, or Dolorous, but that both their harts, with loue and compaſſion equally poſſeſſed, cauſed teares to flow frõ their eyes in aboundance, and their loud ſobbings to interrupt their diſcourſe; ſo as the one

ioyed in her deuout ſcholler and the other was no leſſe pleaſed in hauing ſuch a Miſtreſſe, ſo diuinely prepared by Chriſt, for her.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVII.

How S. Elerius *experiencing* S. Wenefrids *great wisedome and Vertue in many conferences with her, preached her sanctity to his Brethren; And of the many people, who moued with the fame of her Martyrdome and holy life, came from places farre and neere, to see, and speake with her.*

S. *Elerius* liuing with his Monks, not far off, in a most retired, austere and de-

uout manner, delighted many tymes to visit the holy Virgin in her Monastery, discoursing of heauenly misteries and vertuous Practises with her; and found her so cleerely illuminated in the one, & so solidly grounded in the other, that hauing admired her himselfe, and returning home to his brethren was wont to vtter wonderfull prayses of her vnto them.

And her fame at length by the mouths of many became so diuulged, as from

places far & neere, infinite numbers of all ſortes of people flocked vnto her, ſome to know, and ſee ſo noble, louely, and holy a Virgin, who had loſt her head to ſaue her virginity, and after death for her Spouſes greater honour had ben by a holy Man miraculouſly rayſed to life, accounting the place and company she liued in, moſt bleſſed by her preſence: Others, by their great importunity and earneſt prayers obteyned to ſee the white pure circle ſtil re-

mayning in her necke, denoting the wound which in her martyrdome she receaued; the ſight whereof cauſed them to shed many teares of loue, and ioy that Chriſt had triumphed ſo glorioufly in her firſt, and ſent her afterwards ſo happily vnto them.

S. VVenefrid herſelfe would gladly out of her great and profoũd humility haue denyed them that fauour; but a charitable deſire of their good, gayned many wayes thereby, and the other Vir-

gins intreaties, made her willing to affoard that contentment vnto them, as fearing not be made proude with their exceſſiue prayſes, or apt to aſſume vnto herſelfe any merit, of being ſo prayſed; the high knowledge indeed which she had of Gods attributes and perfections, compared with her owne fraylties and nothing, being two ſure grounds of ſolid humility in her.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVIII.

How S. Wenefride *propheticallie foretold in order, the death of* Theonia *first; next her owne; and lastly the holy end of* Elerius: *How also after the death of* Theonia, *she was made Abbesse by* Elerius, *and gouerned that Monastery in all sanctimony, till her dying day.*

BLessed *Elerius* visiting on a tyme *S. VVenefrid* in her Monastery, to conferre, as his custome was, of

holy

holy things, tould her, ſpeaking occaſionally of the happines to dye well, that he had often reioyced to thinke, that he should haue her neere him at his death, and afterwards to pray for him. No Father (ſaid she prophetically vnto him) it will not fall out ſo, Chriſt hauing ordayned the contrary.

For firſt, you shall liue to bury holy *Theonia* our deare Mother, and me alſo ſome few yeares after; which done, you shall in short

tyme

time end holily your dayes, & paſſe full of merits heere gayned, to ioyes euerlaſting.

All which proued true, for very ſoone after *Theonia* fell into a daungerous ſicknes, and finding her ſelfe neere her end, to comfort the Religious praying about her, and bitterly lamenting her departure from them: Children (ſaid she) teares should not be shed for friends, or for our ſelues, vnles ſome euil had hapned to thē or vs; but in my caſe & yours the contrary now appeareth

for I shall by death, haſten I hope, to my Heauenly ſpouſe calling me vnto him; and you in my place shall haue bleſſed *VVenefride*, a much more holy Mother, by her good exãple & heauenly inſtructions to guide you. Looke vpon her therfore as on a bright ſtarre, & shining patterne of all vertue; tread the ſteps, and goe not out of thoſe holy wayes wherein she will lead you, to Religious perfection.

After which words, she receaued the holy ſacramẽt

at Blessed *Elerius* his hands for her *viaticum* towards heauen, & breathed out her pure, and holy soule, gloriously by Angels accompanied thither. After whose exequies solemnly and deuoutly performed, holy *Elerius* ordayned *S. VVenefride* Abbesse in her place, to gouerne the Monastery, which she, in her humility, for a tyme resisted, till Obediẽce to the Saint, and Charity to the sisters instantly beseeching her to vndertake the charge, preuayled with her.

No ſooner was this Office thus impoſed on her, but she, like a Candle ſet on a candleſticke higher then before, began to caſt out more brightly her cleere rayes of Vertues, and to giue a new light & life, as it were to the whole Monaſtery, by her heauenly ſpeaches & examples; ſo as her humility by the dignity of her Office, with her Patience, Charity, and other Vertues, though admirable before, ſeemed now to haue ben very much increaſed in her.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIX.

Of the high esteeme that S. Elerius *himselfe, with other Religious, and secular Persons made of* S. Wenefride: *And of the miracles which she wrought in her Monastery, by curing all sorts of distressed, or sicke people repayring vnto her.*

S. *VVenefride* had not liued long Abbesse of the Monastery, before the fame of her sanctity & wisedome came to be, throughout that

whole

whole prouince, ſo vniuerſally diuulged, as Principall perſons both of the Clergy & Laity repayred frequently vnto her, neuer departing without ſingular edification, by her behauiour and ſpeaches. Yea euen theeues, & robbers themſelues, with other notorious Malefactours, by her gracious aſpect and effectuall exhortations made charitably vnto them, were from their euill wayes, oftentimes reclaymed. And now, not only in priuate houſes, but in

Churches and pulpits alſo, were her vertues frequently recounted, and eſpecially by *S. Elerius*, beſt acquainted with them, who vſed to tell his owne diſciples, and others alſo, that she was diuinely ſent by God, to honour, and benefit the place & Coũtry where she liued: and his words proued true, for no day paſsed almoſt, wherein her diuine Spouſe, to shew her dearenes vnto him, did not comfort, and cure in ſudaine, and miraculous manner, grieued,

ſickly,

ſickly, and diſtreſſed perſons, by the help of her prayers; ſo as her Monaſtery was now become a common refuge vnto them. But amongſt other graces eminent in her, she was noted to haue had a ſingular talent in diſcouering temptations, and teaching withall due remedies therof, wherby not only her ſubiects, but others alſo, euen Prelates thẽſelues, & Religious perſõs, were profitably aſſiſted.

In the vſe of things for herſelfe, she was ſo truly

poore, as not the leaſt ſuperfluity was admitted by her; yea want of needfull things, when at any tyme they happned, were moſt welcom vnto her.

She ſuggeſted alſo no leſſon, more often to her ſiſters, then that they should haue alwais their Redeemers example before their eyes, to imitate thoſe Vertues, which he exerciſed for thé, and to be carefull to haue a pure intention in what they did, only to pleaſe him.

Fortitude and Patience

she euer prayſed, and commended vnto them, as needfull, and certaine remedies, victoriouſly to ouercom all temptations, wherein their merit more, then in not feeling of them, conſiſted; for that by this, and not by the other they should come to be crowned.

Prayer, she was wont to tell them, well made, did dilate their ſoules to receaue plentifull graces; and holy actions did fill them, when they were humbly and feruently performed.

CHAP. XX.

How S. Wenefride *was forewarned of her death, & prepared herselfe for the same; And how by acquainting* S. Elerius *and her sisters therewith, she filled their harts full of heauines, and affliction.*

S. *Wenefride* as a full Pomegranut of heauenly merits, & ripened to fall on the ground, that she might rise in a new spring, more gloriously afterwards, was

in the feruour of her course, & speedy running towards the goale of religious Perfection, warned by her deare Lord, that he meant shortly to call her vnto him.

Which most welcome newes, as of a happinesse long before, and instantly desired, raysed the thoughts and affections of her soule to a more feruent vnion with her Creatour, in extaticall prayer for whole dayes and nights togeather, in humble acts, and painefull exercises of her Charity to-

wards others; in fasting likewise and other great austeri ties, euen as those, who to make a longe iourney in a short tyme, do redouble & widen their paces.

And that she might not leaue her beloued friends vnwarned of her departure on the suddaine from them, she imparted first to *S. Elerius* himselfe, the Call she had receaued from her Sauiour, and afterwards to her sisters; whose sorrow thereat was little inferiour to the excessiue ioy, which her-

ſelfe, by the comfortable thoughts of going to her Lord, continually receaued, and aſwell by flowing teares as dolefull ſpeaches they expreſſed the ſame vnto her. But she, as with a face then wholy turned frō the world towards heauen, intreated them to conforme their will to their Creatours pleaſure therein, and not to doubt, but that she should by her prayers in heauen, be more profitable, then by her preſence heere on earth she could be, vnto them.

For that(ſaid she) is not a Country of ignorance, but of knowledge, cleerely reuealed, whereby the Bleſſed vnderſtand their friends neceſſities heere on earth, and being vnited to the fountayne of Charity it ſelfe, they will be no leſſe powerfull, then ready to procure ſpeedy helps and remedies for them; which I do promiſe to do for you, my beloued deare Children, after Chriſt shall take me vnto him.

And whereas (ſaid she)

to other worldly ſoules vnwilling to dye, and fearefull to behold the face of their high Iudge, whome they are guilty in their liues, grieuouſly to haue offended, Death commeth as a cruell iaylor to breake down their mortery houſes, and to drag them forcibly vnto him: So, to holy Soules, he euer cõmeth as a welcom gueſt, and therefore findeth the dore of their hart open to receaue him; like vnto men expecting the returne of their Lord from his hea-

uenly

uenly wedding, and ready to goe with him, as I am now for that heauenly iourney, with my gracious Lord, throughly (I hope) prepared.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXI.

How S. Wenefride *sickned, & receaued the last Sacrament; and what exceeding comfort she tooke in her death: With a pious Exhortation to her Religious sisters.*

ALbeit the approach of death was not terrible, but most delightfull to *S. Wenefride*, yet was her sicknes the forerunner, and naturall cause thereof, by frequent conuulsions very painefull vnto her, which

she

she with a glad patience, to goe to her heauenly Spouſe, ſilently ſuſtayned, often and earneſtly beſeeching him, not to let the infernall Enemy be frightfull vnto her in her laſt agony.

And finding by her much weaknes, & forces decayed, that her diſſolution approached, she called for the Saint her Confeſſor, to receaue the diuine Sacrament of him, as a ſafe protection in ſo dreadfull a paſſage. And behoulding her ſiſters kneeling round about her,

and

and grieuing aboue measure to looſe her preſence, no leſſe comfortable then profitable vnto them; Deare Children (ſaid she) grieue not ſo, I beſeech you, at my happines thus approaching, but reioyce rather with me, that I shall fully now enioy him in heauen, whome in earth heere, I haue loued. Treade alſo, ſo neerely as you can, my footeſteps, by ſeruing him as I haue done, & contemning for his ſake, ſuch baites, and baſe pleaſures as the world can af-

toard you. Let your promiſed fayth to him be inuiolably obſerued, who by his mercyes and merits is only able to bring you comfortably to this paſſage, and eternally to crowne you. Cõceaue your bodies, though youthfull and faire, to be (as truly they are) but loathſome priſons of your ſoule, and mortery houſes, apt, if you take not heed, to pollute, & defile you: and perſuade your ſelues aſſuredly, that ſo miſerable a world as this is, and full of tempta-

tions,

tions, can yield no true happines or pleasures without daungers vnto you.

To others also that came to visit her, she ceased not at times as her voyce would serue, to giue profitable aduises, & aboue all, that they should be ready, for that passage which herselfe then was entring into; and to spend their liues in such sort, as they might receaue comfort when that moment should approach, on which Eternall weale, or woe dependeth.

CHAP. XXII.

Of S. Wenefrides *happy death and desire to be buried neere* Theonia, *her Mother and Predecessour; which was by* S. Elerius *accordingly performed: of the miracles likewise wrought at* S. Wenefrides *Sepulcher; and of* S. Elerius *holy death.*

AS *S. VVenefride* in the beginning of Nouéber became by her sicknes very much exhausted, so did the ferour of her deuotion,

in

in praying, and ſpeaking of holy things, ſeeme continually increaſed, by repeating often amongſt other profitable Leſſons giuen to her ſiſters this one, to wit, that the cõfort which pure ſoules finde in their death, did aboundantly, recompence all worldly pleaſures and contentments whatſoeuer for the ſeruice of Chriſt by them forſaken.

And calling her Father *S. Elerius* vnto her, after she had taken her laſt leaue of him, in a moſt reſpectfull

ſweet manner, comforting herſelfe and him alſo, by a certaine hope, they shey should meete againe ere longe, and liue in heauen eternally togeather; she afterwards humbly beſought him, that her body might be buried neere vnto *Theonia* her holy Mother, which the Saint gladly promiſed. And ſoone after, in an act of feruent prayer, vpon the 3. day of Nouember she breathed out her pure ſoule into her Redeemers hands, ready to receaue it.

Which being perceaued by *S. Elerius*, and the ſiſters praying about her, they fall into ſuch new complaints, and ſad expreſſions of their ſorrow, that the Saint was enforced, to ſmother his owne griefe, and to comfort them all he could, by declaring, that she was only gone to Heauen before them, where glorioufly, vnited with God, she would be no leſſe powerful & ready then when she liued in earth, by her prayers to help them.

Her body nothing chan-

ged in the louelines thereof by death, was neere vnto *Theonia* solemnly afterwards interred, euen in the ashes, as it were, of many other great Saints, buried in that place before, amõgst whom *Cheb* and *Sennan*, the one lying at her head, and the other by her side, were for sanctity & miracles in their dayes famously renowned, and had Churches therfore (euen yet remayning in that Prouince) to their memories erected; wherein by wonderous signes their glory with

God

God is now frequently teſtified.

And albeit theſe two, & other innumerable Saintes haue ben interred in that holy ground; yet was the ſame, for *S. VVenefrides* Sepulcher afterwards eſpecially honoured, & graced with numberles, and notorious miracles, by her prayers there obteyned.

S. Elerius alſo, ſoone after holily diſceaſed, & was buried in a Church erected to his Name and memory, in which at this very day Al-

mighty God, through his merits and prayers worketh miraculous cures vpon persons either diſeaſed, or diſtreſſed.

The End of the firſt Booke.

AN APPENDIX

Of the Tranſlatour, concerning diuers particulars of S. Wenefrids *Hiſtory, omitted by the Author.*

MY Author (Courteous Reader) more carefull to write plainely and truly his Hiſtory, then to obſerue the conditions of an exact Hiſtorian, ſpeaketh not of the tyme wherein *S. Wencfride* liued, as he should haue done; nor when her body was to *Shrewsbury*

tranſlated; nor whether *S. Elerius*, or other Saints reliques mentioned in her life, were with it tranſferred. Wherefore, I will heere adde what I haue read, for your further ſatisfaction.

Firſt therefore, I find in a learned collection which a friend of myne hath made of Britiſh and Engliſh Antiquities, either wholy omitted, or obſcurely expreſſed by other writers; that *S. Wenefride* liued about the yeare of Chriſt 660. And wheras *S. Bede* flouriſhing alſo at that tyme hath made no mention of her at all in his Hiſtory, amongſt the other Saints of our Countrey; it might well happen, becauſe the continuall iarrs, and bloudy quarrels between the *Britans* and *Saxons*,

did

did ſo hinder all commerce betweene theſe two Nations, as that it ſeemes the Acts of one Church became almoſt wholy vnknowne vnto the other, eſpecially in Yorkeſhyre, where *S. Bede* moſt commonly liued, far diſtant from any part of Wales: ſo as his ſilence of her, and of *S. Elerius* (in the Roman martyrologe acknowledged) as of many other Britiſh Saintes glorioufly flouriſhing in thoſe dayes, and before inſinuated alſo by my Author, diſproueth nothing that is by him, or any other learned Antiquary affirmed.

Her body was in the yeare of our Lord 1138. tranſlated to *Shrewsbury*, togeather with the reliques of many other Saintes neere

vnto

vnto hers formerly interred. And for proofe hereof, beſides the teſtimonies of Authors, about 36. yeares ſince, a Proteſtant Gentleman willing to pleaſure a learned friend of mine, whome he knew to be Catholique, preſented him with an arme, as he ſaid, of *S. Wenefride*, ſaued by ſome body when her Shrine was defaced. The which he finding not decently kept, but put into a very old leather bag full of Cobwebs (as himſelfe hath tould me) taking it out, more decently to adorne it, found in a paper fixed thereon, ſomewhat written in an old hād, ſo as with much difficulty he read at laſt theſe words, *Sancti Elerij*; whereby he vnderſtood, that it was not the arme of *S. Wenefride*,

but

but of *S. Elerius*, translated doubtlesse with her, or soone after, to *Shrewsbury*.

Hauing likewise conferred with diuers learned men of *Wales*, neither superstitious, nor ouercredulous to belieue Fables, or vncertainties, they haue tould me of so many places in sundry parts of *Wales*, northwards especially, famous heeretofore, as pilgrimages to Saintes bodies there interred, that I conceaue the old *Brittish* Monkes and Hermits, in number and religious sanctity of life, not to haue ben inferiour to those primitiue Monkes of *Egypt*, *Palestine*, *Syria*, and other places, by *S. Athanasius*, *S. Hierome*, & other ancient Fathers famously renowned; albeit as liuing in more remote &

ruder

ruder parts of the world then the others did, the hiſtories of their holy liues haue not been by learned mens pens equally diuulged.

In ſo much, as *M. Camden*, no fauourable reporter of ſuch Catholique Acts and Monuments, rarely now extant, ſpeaking of the old britiſh Monkes of *Glaſtenbury* Monaſtery from the firſt Apoſtolicall tymes of that Church, hath theſe wordes, in his *Britannia: Primis his temporibus viri ſanctiſsimi &c.* In theſe firſt tymes (to wit of the Britiſh Church before the *Saxons* inuaſion of England, more then 1100. yeares ſince) many moſt holy men night and day attending to the ſeruice of God, liued in this place, maintayned by the Kings liberality

and

and trayning vp youth in piety & liberal ſciences, imbraced a ſolitary life, that ſo with greater quiet & repoſe they might attend to the ſtudies of Diuinity, and exerciſe themſelues in all ſeuerity, to beare the Chriſt of Chriſt &c. Of which ſort of Monkes ſo by him deſcribed, were very many Religious men, diſperſed in like manner though all parts of that Church, liuing either in holy Communities as Monkes, or els alone as Hermites in ſolitary places; of which number were *S. Beuno*, *S. Saturnus*, *S. Deifer*, S. *Elerius*, *S. Cheb*, and *S. Sennan* mentioned in this life of *S. VVenefrid.*

And, as Godly men, ſo Holy Virgins alſo, did liue in houſes religiouſly togeather, like vnto

thoſe mentioned by *S. Hicrome*, who liued at *Bethleem*, vnder *S. Paula*, and *Euſtochium* her Daughter: & ſuch was the houſe wherin *S. Wenefride* liued, firſt at *Finhon* the place of her martyrdome, and afterwards at *Guitherin* (called in Latin *Witheriacum* by my Author) where ſhe dyed happily, and was honoured 600. yeares together for a Saint, vntill her ſollemne tranſlation, as is aforeſaid, to *Shrewſbury*; where alſo ſhe hath byn by God glorified with many miracles euen vntill our dayes, as ſhe had byn before both at *Finhon*, and *Guitherin*, the places aboue mentioned.

THE

THE SECOND BOOKE,
conteyning the miracles wrought at *S. Wenefrides Well*; as also vpon her Translation to *Shrewsbury*.

CHAP. I.

Of the great concourse of people to her Well, *graced by miracles, no lesse then before, after her departure from that place.*

ALmighty God ceased not by wonderfull

miracles to grace the holy place of *S. VVenefrids* martyrdome, after he had inspired her (as hath ben said) before her death wholy to abandone it, to the end deuout people, perchance, in other parts of the Country might come to know the eminent sanctity of her life, and herselfe perfect the graces of her soule, by liuing humbly, and obediently amongst strangers, as she did for many yeares, vntill by her singular merits & exemplar life, she was ordeyned

againſt her will, to be a holy Miſtreſſe and gratefull Gouerneſſe of many Virgins.

We may alſo conceaue, that this humble Virgin, (who was wont to blush, yea and shed teares, when she heard herſelfe prayſed) deſired, & obteyned of her heaueuly Spouſe, to goe out of the way, as it were, and abſent herſelfe from that place, where she could not chooſe but be ſeene, and honoured by multitudes of people, daily viſitting her *VVell*, as the miraculous

Trophy of her martyrdome there ſuſteyned; wondring firſt, to ſee ſuch a ſource of pure water breaking out of the ground vpon which her head firſt fell; next, to behould the ſtones therein, as with drops of her bloud ſtrangly ſtayned, or died rather; and laſtly to ſmell the greene moſſe growing about the *VVell*, with a muſky ſweet odour more then naturally perfumed.

It was (I ſay) a pleaſure no doubt, and much by the holy Virgin deſired, to liue

out of the noiſe of her owne prayſes there daily reſounded; eſpecially when to the wonders of the place it ſelfe, other miraculous Cures began to be wrought vpon leaprous, blind, and all kind of diſeaſed perſons, either by drinking of the water, or bathing themſelues in it: of which ſome few, in the Chapters following shalbe by me declared.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

Of a blind maid restored to her sight, by washing her head in S. Wenefrids Well, *and praying in her Chappell.*

A POORE Carpenter dwelling not far from *S. VVenefrides VVell*, had a Daughter borne blind, who hauing hard of the wonderfull cures wrought there, by the interceſſion and merits of that holy Virgin, ceaſed not to importune her Father daily, that she might

be

be ledd to that miraculous *Well*; and hauing finally obteyned the ſame, she firſt bathed her head in the water thereof, and then being conducted to the Chappell neere vnto it, she ſpent the whole night deuoutely in prayer, that God would be pleaſed through the merits and interceſſion of the Saint, there martyred for his ſake, to beſtow vpon her corporall ſight, the better to ſerue him afterwards: & falling into a ſlumber, towards the morning in a cor-

ner of the Chappell, she was no sooner awaked, but she found herselfe to see perfectly; which being perceaued by her Father, he ceased not, togeather with his Daughter, ioyfully to proclayme that miraculous fauour by *S. VVenefrids* powerfull prayers, euidently obteyned.

The fame of this miracle generally diuulged, bred a fresh deuotion in others, to repayre in like manner to that place, for obteyning help, and comfort in their

corporall and ſpirituall diſtreſſes; and they were not fruſtrated of their hopes, faythfully, and deuoutely ſo conceaued: whereby the former great Fame of the place, became more vniuerſally and glorioufly diuulged, to the honour of him, by whoſe omnipotency and gracious goodnes theſe miraculous cures were multiplied, delightfully glorified in the honours done to his Saintes, and in their glories eternally exalted.

CHAP. III.

How a Theefe was punished for pursuing one that fled into S. Wenefrids *Church: And how the same man, humbled for his fault, was miraculously saued from death.*

IT happened that a messenger sent by a Chiefe Lord of that Country, to warne his Neighbours of some danger approaching frõ the *Saxons* their Borderers, and alwayes commonly in enmity with them,

was

was way-layd by Theeues, and purſued towards *S. VVenefrids* Church, whither as to a ſafe Sanctuary he fled, and haſtily tying his horſe at the Church dore, ranne himſelfe vp to the Aultar, where the Theeues, not daring to purſue him further, left him, but tooke away his horſe.

The meſſenger after their departure, returning towards the dore, and finding his horſe gone, entred againe very dolefully into the Church, and proſtrate

before

before the Aultar, vttered his cõplaintes to the Saint of the iniury, and losse therby sustained, beseeching her to punish, as they deserued the wrongfull Authors of that and other mischiefes, to the great harme of honest people sinfully committed, and by some exemplar reuenge taken vpon them, to warne, and deterre others, from violating in like manner, the safety of her Chappel, and reuerence due vnto it; and so departed onwards in his iourney, not

fru-

fruſtrate afterward of what he had prayed for.

For Almighty God, in honour of *S. VVenefrid* and her Chappell, forthwith afflicted the Theefe that had vnlooſed, and taken away the horſe, with ſuch a raging extremity of payne, throughout his whole body, that he often deſired to be freed by death from ſo intollerable a torment, daily increaſing on him, till the humours which cauſed the ſame, fel into his right arme, making it firſt to ſwell, and

afterwards to rot in a moſt horrible, and loatheſome manner, vntill at length humbled by affliction, and hopeles of all eaſe otherwiſe he came in a very penitent manner, to the Saints chappell, confeſſing his fault, & demaunding her pardon, with many teares, for ſo great a wrong and inſolency committed there by him.

Vpon this his humiliation he became eaſed by degrees, and by little and little cured of his paineful vlcer, prayſing God, and the holy

Martyr for their mercyes towards him, & remayning euer afterwards whilſt he liued, a dreadfull example, to warne others, from violating, as he had done, the ſanctity of that place, or wronging *S. VVenefrids* clients running for ſuccour in their diſtreſſes vnto her.

The Fame alſo of this miracle diuulged abroad, increaſed much the peoples opinion of the place, and their deuotion towards the Saint, who had shewed herſelfe ſo powerfull a Patro-

neſſe

neſſe of her Chappell, and Defendreſſe of ſuch, as for their ſafety, and protection from iniuries, repayred vnto it.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

How certaine Theeues who had ſtolne a Cow neere to S. Wenefrids *Chappell, and driuen her through Rocky wayes, were notwithſtanding traced by her footeſteps in the hard ſtones miraculouſly imprinted, and ſo enforced to leaue her to the Owners purſuing them.*

ANother Miracle, no leſse wonderfull then the former hapned in this manner. Certaine Theeues

hauing ſtolne a Cow, out of a paſture neere to *S. Venefrids* Chappell, & driuen her through Rocky high wayes, that they might not by her footing be traced, it fell out far otherwiſe: for the Cow trod not one ſteppe, but as if she had gone in durty deepe wayes, wherby her footing, and the theues alſo themſelues, ſo plainely appeared, that the owner & his Neighbours, the next morning miſſing the beaſt, did very eaſily ſee which way she was driuen.

Where-

Whereupon they following the tracke with all ſpeed, came ſo neere to ouertake the Theeues, that they were conſtreyned in great feare to fly away, and leaue the Cow behind them to their purſuers. VVho at better leaſure afterwardes conſidering how the Cowes feet had miraculouſly made prints in the hard ſtones as she was driuen away, but not as she returned, perceaued it to be an euident miracle, and for ſuch, to the honour of *S. VVenefride*, by

whoſe prayers it hapned, they diuulged the ſame, through out the whole Countrey; & the infinite nũbers of people flocking thither to ſee the ſaid printes in the ſtones ſo ſtraũgly made by the Cowes feet, increaſed the fame thereof.

Now the theeues themſelues, fearing for their theft committed ſo neere vnto the Saintes Chappell, to be punished by her, as the other had bene before, for ſtealing the horſe mentioned in the former

Chapter ,came of thẽſelues before the Virgin Martyrs Aultar, and confeſsed penitently their fault in the preſence of many people, with promiſe to commit the like no more, in honour of the Bleſsed Saint, who had in ſo ſtrang a manner, diſcouered in hard ſtones, and flints, the tracke of their owne, and of the Cowes footings. Which fact of theirs being thus diſcouered, & voluntarily confeſsed, proued a generall warning to many other bad men of that ta-

king trade, to abstayne likewise from theft, especially out of any place, neere to the Saintes Chappels.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

Of daily Cures done vpon ſicke children throwne into the ſtreame of S. VVenefrids *VVell; and of others alſo cured miraculouſly of agues, & hoat feauers, by drinking of the ſame water.*

IN proceſſe of tyme, this ſacred Fountayne, the Trophy, and triumphant ſigne of *S. VVenefrids* Martyrdome, became ſo famouſly renowned, for miraculous cures done by the wa-

ters thereof, that Mothers were vſually wont to throw their young children ſicke of any diſeaſe, into the ſtreame running from the ſame, who became preſently cured, by the touch of thoſe waters.

Such alſo as had Agues, or hoat burning Feauers in any part of the Country, were wont for a certaine and preſent remedie therof, either to drincke a draught of that pure fountaine-water, or if they had it not at hand, to put in ſome one of

the blouddy ſtones, taken out of the VVell, into a draught of any other water, and became thereby preſently cured. In like māner ſuch as had any ſwelling or ſoare about them, were accuſtomed to bath the part affected, with the ſaid water, and found preſent remedy thereby.

The firſt vſe of which remedies, for all ſorts of ſores and diſeaſes, is ſaid to haue ben taught by the holy Virgin-Martyr herſelfe, who viſibly after her death

appearing to many who in dangerous ſickneſse deuoutely called vpon her, willed them to apply the water & ſtones of her well in mãner aforeſaid, for their perfect, and ſpeedy recouery: Almighty God cõtinuing ſtill, to grace this glorious Monument of his deare ſpouſes death, by affoarding helpe thereby to ſuch, as either deuoutely repaire vnto it, or faithfully ſeeke remedies frõ it; according to *S. Beuno* his holy prediction, whẽ before his departure frõ thoſe

parts he ſate vpon a ſtone with *S. VVenefride* herſelfe, neere to the Wels ſide, and foretould the miraculous cures which should throgh her merits and prayers be at the ſame, afterwards performed.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

How diuers thefts from places neere vnto the Well, *were by* S. Wenefride *miraculouſly punished; and how the Authors became warned and penitent for the ſame.*

THE ſtreames of water breaketh out of *Saint VVenefrides* VVell, in ſuch abundance togeather, as within one furlongs ſpace it driueth a mill, neuer ſtanding ſtill for want of water euen in the greateſt drought

of

of ſummer, nor is euer hindred from grinding, by any freezing of the ſtreame, by which it is driuen in winter.

This Mill, by certaine theeues, was vpon a tyme robbed in the night, and the Irons thereof were carried away to be put into another mill built not far frō thence by thoſe that ſtole them: but through the merits of *S. VVenefride* a ſtrange euent hapned heer about for the Mill into which theſe Irons were put, could neuer be

made

made to turne, or grind any thing therewith: ſo as the ſtealers thereof mooued at length by the miracle more thē once experiēced, brought them back againe, and confeſſed their fault penitently in the Saintes Chappell; warning others thereby not to commit the like theft in placesneere vnto it for feare of beeing, by her prayers, punished for it.

By this Miracle ſo diuulged, many people alſo were moued the more to glorify God, in thoſe wonderous

things which he did, to testifie, the great merits of this holy Virgin *S. VVenefride*, ioyfully relating to one another, how *S. Beuno's* prediction of the innumerable Cures which should be done by those miraculous waters, and by the Virgins owne prayers, began to be now fulfilled, when as humbly prostrate on her knees before her departure frō that place, she besought her heauenly spouse, corporally to blesse, and spiritually to sanctifie those who in

honour of him, and his graces in herſelfe, should in future tymes viſit that Fountayne.

And as wonderfull, yea almoſt daily, miracles graced this place thus bleſſed by her; ſo was her Sepulcher after her death, for the like Cures wrought thereat, equally illuſtrious & renowned by the multitudes of blind, deafe, lazar, & diſeaſed people, who by kiſſing and touching the earth about it, were miraculouſly cured.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

Of the first occasion of Translating S. Wenefrids *reliques to the Monastery of Benedictã Monkes in* Shrewsbury, *happened vpon a vision to a holy Monke in* Chester, *of the same Order.*

THe miraculous cures daily wrought at *S. VVenefrids VVell*, and at the place of her Sepulcher also, continued vntill the raigne King *VVilliam the Conqueror*, at what time a chiefe Earle

of his Court, called *Roger*, through his great piety and zeale to mantayne Gods ſeruants, built in *Shrewsbury* a ſumptuous faire Monaſtery, and endowed the ſame with ſufficient reuenewes, to his owne great prayſe, and the benefit of that Citty: which Monaſtery being ended, & Religious men with their Superiour placed therin, they began, piouſly to complayne that they wãted reliques in their Church, whereas that Country of *VVales* in innumerable pla-

ces

ces was ſtored aboundantly with them, by reaſon of ſo many great Saintes, men & women, who formerly had flourished in great ſanctity of life, and miraculous teſtifications therof, throughout that whole Kingdome.

Whereupon to haue their Church hallowed, & their new Monaſtery guarded with ſuch ſacred pledges, munificētly placed, & duly honoured by thē, they begā to inquire after ſome ſpeciall Saint, whoſe Reliques might happily be gotten for

that purpose by them; during which deliberation of theirs, a Monke of this their Monastery, fell very sicke, in body, and so distracted in mind withall, that not only his Brethren there, but in *Chester* and other places also, hearing of his pittifull case, ceased not to pray most hartily for him.

And as in *Chester-Abbey*, the Subprior of that Monastery, a godly man, called *Radulphus*, had one day ended his prayer for that end,

he

he fell into an vnuſuall kind of ſleepe, to whome a woman, the meane while, in a very glorious habit appeared, and ſaid: If you deſire the ſicke Monks health, let ſome one of you goe, & ſay a Maſſe in the Chappell, neere *S. VVenefrids VVell* for him, and he ſhall preſently recouer; & ſo she vanished.

The Moncke heerewith awaked, durſt not for ſome tyme impart this viſion vnto any, as fearing little credit would be giuen vnto it, vntill at length, the

ſicknes and great diſtemper of his deare Brother lamentably ſtill increaſing, charitably moued him to ſpeake thereof vnto his brethren, who preſently belieued the ſame, and that it was *S. VVenefride* herſelfe who had appeared vnto him. Wherfore ſending forthwith two of their Company to the forſaid Chappell, to ſay Maſſe accordingly, the ſicke Mõke at that very inſtant, being then in *Shrewsbury*, recouered his health.

Who ſoone after this his

mira-

miraculous recouery, came himſelfe in perſon, vnto the ſaid Chappell and Well, as he greatly deſired, to giue God thankes for the ſame; and after hauing bathed himſelfe in the water, and alſo druncke therof, he ioyfully returned home to *Shrewsbury* perfectly cured: neuer ceaſing afterwards to be thankefull to God, and the Bleſſed Martyr, for that gracions fauour, by her prayers chiefly obteyned.

And not only he, but the reſt of his Brethren like-

wise began to be singularly deuoted vnto her, and laboured by all meanes possible to get some particle of her Virginall sacred Body vnto them.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

Of the earneſt deſire which the Abbot & Monkes of Shrewſbury *had to get the body of* S. VVenefride *vnto them: And how finally after many yeares, & very great difficulties, they obteyned the ſame.*

THe Abbot & Monks of *Shrewsbury*, for many yeares perſiſting in their holy deſires, of getting *S. VVenefrides* body, obteyned at length in the peacefull

reigne of King *Henry* the first a Grant therof, but by reason of wars, and many tumults happening in that Countrey after this Kings death, it was not effected vntill the secõd yeare of King *Stephens* reigne, when as the holy Abbot *Herbert* in a consultation of his Monkes, ordeyned *Robert* his Prior, togeather with one *Richard*, a chiefe Monke of the same Monastery, to go into *VVales* about it.

Before whose going, the said *Robert*, more solicitous

then others in the buſineſſe, directed diuers letters vnto friends in *VVales*, beſt likely therein to aſſiſt him, who promiſed gladly their help, & wished him to haſten his cõming amõgſt thẽ. Wherfore beginning his iourney he firſt viſitted the Bishop of *Bangor*, in his way, and was by him directed to a Principall Lord who ruled in that Country, & by him him very courteouſly receaued.

As ſoone as the Noble Man, had vnderſtood the

cauſe

cauſe of his cõming: Reuered Father (ſaid he) I doubt not, but that God, and the Bleſſed Martyr hath ſent you to tranſlate her holy body, to your Monaſtery, where it will be much more honoured then heere in this Countrey it is. VVherfore I will not only yield you my conſent therennto, but will ſend alſo my ſeruants therein to aſſiſt you. And ſinfull man, as I am, did not my preſent, and very important buſineſſes, hinder me, I would preſume to goe with

you in perſon, and with my vnworthy handes, deliuer thoſe ſacred Reliques, and Pledge of Sanctity, vnto you.

VVith which gracious anſwere they departed towards the Saints Sepulcher, being ſeauen in number, to wit, the two Priours of *Shrewsbury* & *Cheſter*, *Richard* the Monke, with a godly Prieſt borne in that Country, and three attendants; who going onwards in their iourney, not far from *Guitherine* they met with a man

that

that tould them, how the Inhabitants therabour, hauing heard of their comminge, were exceedingly troubled thereat, and absolutely resolued to hinder them in their pretence, and not to suffer the chiefe Saint, & Patroneſſe of their Countrey, by ſtrangers to be carried away from them. And (ſaid he) from this their reſolution generally taken, no fauour or power of any man liuing, will be able to draw them.

Theſe words being plai-

nely and ſincerely vttered, very much troubled Prior *Robert* and his companions all that night; but yet praying all togeather, and humbly crauing Gods direction & aſſiſtãce in their intẽded buſines, they neuertheleſſe aduentured, to proſecute their iourney, & comming the next day neere to the place, Prior *Robert* thought good to remaine himſelfe in a Farmers houſe, priuatly lodged that night, and to ſend the *Prior* of *Cheſter* and the other Prieſt to *Gui-*

therine

therine before him, as men well borne, and knowne in that Country.

After they were gone, Prior *Robert*, rising as his custome was by night to say his mattins, was certified by one of his company, a good deuout man, that a glorious Virgin had appeared that night to him, bidding him goe to his Prior, & tell him from her, that he should be of good comfort, because he should ioyfully and prosperously, effect the busines which he came for, by the

help of her, whose honour he hath so particularly sought; and hauing accepted of his holy intention, will ioyne also with him, in the performance therof.

CHAP.

CHAP. IX.

How Prior Robert *himselfe had a vision, whereby he vnderstood, that he should obteyne the body of* S. Wenefride, *and carry it vnto* Shrewsbury *with him.*

THe Prior much comforted with the relation of the vision which his seruant, as before had made vnto him, began to slumber after his Mattins ended, & in his sleepe seemed to see a holy Abbot of his owne

Monaſtery, called *Godfrey*, who ſome yeares before in a good old age, and great ſanctity of life was happily diſceaſed, vttering theſe words comfortably vnto him. Brother *Robert*, feare not of fayling in your intent, but be of good cheere, for we shal ouercome ſuch as shall oppoſe vs therein, by Gods helpe, and obteyne what hath ben by vs, for many yeares togeather ſo earneſtly deſired.

Which ſaid, he vanished preſently away, leauing the

Prior full of good hope, to obteyne that, which his ſpeach imported; ſo as in the morning, he comfortably declared to thoſe who were with him the viſion he had alſo receaued, and willed them therefore to prepare preſently for their iourney. But before they were ready, a meſſenger came from the other Prior purpoſely ſent, to haſten them forwards & to certifie them withall, that Almighty God, and the Saint herſelfe had diſpoſed all things, ſo proſperouſly,

for them, that they should not returne without obteyning what they desired.

This ioyfull message receaued, they went on, and making what speede they could, they came early in the morning to the Church where *S. VVenefrides* body was certainely interred, and hauing for a while at her shrine deuoutely prayed, the chiefe Priest of the Parish came in, and courteously saluted them, as they did him likewise in a very humble manner, earnestly in-

treating him withall, to be their charitable helper, in carrying away the Saintes body with them, to a place where it should be more magnificently interred then there it was, and daily honoured, by multitudes of people, desirous to haue so sacred a Treasure reposed amongst them.

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

How the Parish Priest courteously condescended to their desire, as hauing byn before hand diuinely prepared, to deliuer the body of S. Wenefride *vnto them.*

THe good Priest patiently hard their requeſt, and courteously tould them, that he for his part, would easily graunt what they desired of him, as hauing had for sometyme before, the will of God, and of

the ſacred Virgin herſelfe, intimated vnto him, as now (ſaid he) I ſhall briefly tell you.

On Eaſter Eue laſt, I watching all night in this place, had a viſion which exceedingly affrighted me, for a beautifull young man appeared vnto me, ſcarſely then a ſleepe, and fully wakening me, bad me riſe. To whome I anſwered, that it was not as yet tyme to begin mattins, and ſo he left me. But returning the ſecond time when I was much

more then before ſoundly aſleepe, he bad me riſe as he had done before. Whereupon beeing very heauy, I tould him, that I would riſe in due tyme, and couering my head with my cloake, returned to ſleepe agayne.

But he, returning the third tyme vnto me, pulled away my cloake with great force, willing me to follow him quickly, as I did, being very much affrighted: and comming to the Virgins Shrine, he pointed with his fingar towards it, and ſaid:

Note this place well, & my words also, whereby I do command thee, that if some moneths hence any persons come to opé this Sepulcher, & to carry away she Saintes body with them, hinder them not in their holy designe, but assist them in all thou maist, least by dooing contrary to what I heere diuinely foretell thee, some painefull & vnremediable sicknes, to punish thy disobedience, do happen vnto thee. And hauing vttered these words, this Angel,

as I thinke he was, vanished away. So as I wil not faile for my part, to help you in your purpose, by persuading others also, who are owners of this village, to yield willingly the Saints body: and for this purpose I haue ordeined them to come themselues hither vnto you.

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

The Priours ſpeach vnto the people aſsẽbled in the Church, about obteyning their leaue to carry away S. Wenefrids *Body; and how their conſent was finally obteyned.*

THe Priour ſeeing the people in great numbers aſſembled, by an Interpreter tould them, that he and his Companions were come, diuinely warranted, to procure of them *S. VVenefrids* body, that in their

Citty, and Monaſtery much deuoted vnto her, it might more thé it could be there, honoured and reſpected; & the Bleſſed Virgin Martyr herſelfe (ſaid he) as your Paſtour heere partly knoweth) hath by many viſions manifeſted her willingnes hereunto, and will not be pleaſed with ſuch as ſhall dare heerein to reſiſt her. To which ſpeach of his, they gently harkened, and became inclined thereby to graunt what he requeſted: one only amongſt them op-

poſed

poſed himſelfe, and clamorouſly tould them in preſence of the reſt, that they should neuer be depriued, by his will, of ſo ſacred a Treaſure, as was the body of that Saint, who had liued holily, and dyed happily in that place, leauing her reliques to be honoured by them, no leſſe then they had ben by their Anceſtors before them, Allmighty God hauing from tyme to tyme, by miracles, approued the pious deuotion of people towards them.

This

This passionate boldnes of the man much troubled the Prior, so as to stop his mouth, and gayne his consent, he caused one of his cõpany to giue him money very largely, by which he was so altered, as that others not knowing the reason of his change (carefully from them concealed) wondered thereat; and imputing the same to some miraculous operation wrought by God and the Saint, began to yield their owne consents somewhat more willingly,

then

then before, and finally after many consultations passed among themselues, at last they all fully agreed, & consented that the Saintes body should be presently taken vp, and deliuered decently vnto them.

For which resolution the Prior and his companions very hartily & courteously gaue them thankes, & without any delay desired to enter the holy Ile, wherin the Saintes Shrine had ben for many ages deuoutely visitted by holy Pilgrims, and

many wonderfull cures vpon diſeaſed perſons frequently performed.

Neither did they find her body there alone, but many holy bodies both of men and women alſo were found lying by it; hauing without the place of their buriall, a woodden lardge porch, wherein the people vſed to kneele and pray; eſteemed alſo ſacred of it ſelfe for this continuall miracle, that if any beaſt came to feed of the graſſe neere vnto it, it preſently dyed; &

men themſelues exemplarly punished, if at any tyme they committed any irreuerence, or vnſeemly thing therein.

CHAP.

CHAP. XII.

How a certaine man had beene exemplarly punished, two yeares before the Priours comming to Guitherine, *for offering to cut downe a branch of an old Oake which grew neere the Martyrs Shrine, ſeruing for a shade to the Pilgrimes reſorting thither; and how he was by* S. Wenefride *miraculouſly releaſed.*

AMONGST frequent & very euident mi-

racles wrought at *Guitherin* Church, by *S. VVenefride*, and other Saintes there interred, this one as freshly happened, was vnto the Prior and his companions thus certainely recounted.

A certaine labouring man two yeares before, presumed, for some vse, to cut downe a bough of an old Oake, growing neere the Church dore in holy groūd yielding also a conuenient shade, and shelter to such deuout pilgrimes as could not sometimes enter into

the Church for the Concourſe of people, but were forced to ſtay without, and pray vnder it: Who had no ſooner ſtrooke his Hatchet into the bough, but it became therein immoueably fixed, and his whole hand and arme did likewiſe cleaue ſo faſt vnto the handle of the hatchet, that they ſeemed to haue grown vnto it, & by no force were able to be remoued.

The poore man finding himſelfe in this diſtreſſe, cried out for help, which his

neighbours hearing, they came running to the place, but finding him in that moſt pittifull plight, ſtood amazed at the miracle, as not able any way to help him. Wherfore by their aduiſe he began to repent him of his fault, and humbly beſought, amōgſt the other Saints, *S. VVenefrid* to help him. The reſt alſo ioyning in like prayer with him, after they had cryed aloud and all togeather, *Holy VVenefride take pitty on him*, his hand was preſently looſed

from the hatchet, and his arme to all freedome reſtored.

Which euident miracle ſeene by the people, they renewed their wonted veneration to the Saint. They shewed alſo vnto Priour *Robert* and his companions, the Cut which the man had made in the branch of the tree, remayning ſtill for a teſtimony thereof: ſo as with very good reaſon, they all much reuerenced that holy place, by innumerable miracles ſo diuinely graced.

CHAP. XIII.

How Priour Robert, *the Author of this historie, did himselfe take vp the holy body of* S. VVenefride, *and carry it towards* Shrewsbury; *How also in the way, he wrought a miracle by some of the earth, found in the Holy head of that Blessed Martyr.*

PRior *Robert* hauing had a generall leaue from the Pastour of the Church and his parishioners to take

vp the Saintes body, went downe without a guide into her Tõbe or Sepulcher, and by an interiour light, communicated then diuinely vnto him, knowing where it lay, cauſed the Tombeſtone to be remoued, and labourers to digge towards the body; which when they had found, the Prior cauſing them to goe forth out of the Vault, he only with ſome Prieſts and Religious perſons, ſtayed behind, ſinging pſalmes of ioy deuoutely togeather, &

taking vp the holy bones, togeather with the next earth that lay about them, he cauſed them to be put into a fine linnen Cloth, which he had brought for that purpoſe, & ſo deuoutly wrapped them togeather.

With which holy Burden, after he had hartily thanked the Paſtour of the Church, & the reſt of thoſe Inhabitants, for ſo ſacred a Treaſure beſtowed vpon him, he with his Company rode that night backwards in their iourney, and being

lodged

lodged by an honeſt Farmer in their way, they heard a man in ſome remote part of the houſe pittifully to groane, and often cry out through the painefullnes of his ſicknes. Wherefore the good Priour enquiring where was, went to viſit him, & commiſerating his caſe, tooke a little water and bleſſed it, putting therinto a little of the earth which he found in *S. Wenefrids* head, & cauſed the party to drinke it; which was no ſooner paſſed downe

into

into the ſicke mans ſtomack, but he fell ſoundly aſleepe, and when he awaked, found himſelfe of his daungerous and painefull infirmity perfectly recouered.

By which moſt euident Miracle, the credit of thoſe ſacred reliques, to the great ioy of the Priour himſelfe and his companions, was diuinely confirmed, and the deuotion of all preſent towards them increaſed. Others alſo there preſent did learne from thence,

what

what due veneration & reuerence was to be yielded afterwards vnto them.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIV.

How Priour Robert, *after ſeauen dayes iourney, arriuing with the ſacred Reliques at* Shrewsbury, *was by his Abbot commanded to place them in* S. Giles *his Church neere the gate of that Citty, vntill all was ready for their ſollemne receauing into the Monaſtery: With a notable miracle which happened in that place.*

PRior *Robert* & his company in ſeauen dayes

ended

ended their iourney backe againe with the ſacred treaſure to *Shrewsbury*; and hauing before giuen notice to the Abbot of their approach, they were willed by him to ſtay, and repoſe the ſame decently in *S. Giles* his Church neere the gate of the Citty, that the Lord Biſhop and his Clergy, with the reſt of the people might be warned therof, and in ſolléne proceſſion bring them to the Monaſtery.

And for the greater honor of them in the meane time,

the Monks were appointed night and day, in their turnes, to watch and pray deuoutely before them, accompanied alwayes in their prayers with multitudes of the people, hartily delighted at such vnusuall Treasures bought vnto them. Neither did the Saint faile by many miraculous cures of sick persons, to requite this her deuout entertaynment; one amongst the rest was especially noted, and so great a one indeed, as it deserueth heere to be particularly

larly recounted, wrought vpon a younge man, who had layne long miſerably diſeaſed, and ſo in his limbs contracted, that he could not ſtand, or lift vp his head from his knees, towardes heauen.

This man moued with the fame of theſe Reliques and miraculous cures, frequently wrought by them at *S. Giles* Church, deſired to be carried thither, and ſet before the Aultar whereon the Sacred Reliques were placed. Where after he had

prayed all the night that God through the merits & prayers of great *S. Venefrid*, would be pleased to cure him, he fell towardes the morning into a slumber, and before the Priest came to say the first masse, he was to the wonder of all present, & of the whole Citty likewise, perfectly cured, and made whole; so as after he had soũded forth thankeful prayses to God & the holy Martyr, he returned without help of others ioyfully homewards on his feet.

CHAP.

CHAP. XV.

With what solemnity & pompe S. Wenefrides *body was brought vnto the Abbey-Church of* Shrewsbury: *And of a strange Miracle which happened thereat.*

THE former miracle increased much the fame of these holy Reliques brought into the Citty, and the opinion also of *S. VVenefrids* sanctity, so that the cõcourse of people was very great, daily hono-

ring the holy Virgin in them. Priour *Robert* in the meane tyme hauing by order of his Abbot, treated with the Bishop about the ſolemnity of bringing her body frō *S. Giles* his Church to the Monaſtery; it was agreed betweene them, that the people of the Citty and Country likewiſe should be warned of the certaine day whē this ſolēnity should be kept, and the Bishops bleſſing & indulgences for ſuch a feaſt promulgated, to all that should be preſent in

the

the processiõn.

Whereupon, the throng of people kneeling on ech side of the streetes & shedding teares of ioy for such a blessing, brought amongst them, was so great, that it was a wõder to see how gratefull their deuotion was to God, and to the Saint thus honored by them. At which tyme also hapned an euident miracle in the sight of all, worthy heere to be related.

The morning wherein this solemne processiõn was

to be made, began to be all ouercaſt with darke clouds, threatning preſent rayne, which had it fallen, would haue cauſed no doubt great nũbers to haue withdrawne themſelues, for feare of ſpoyling their beſt and coſtly apparell, and ſo haue leſſened the ſolẽnity intended. But the Godly, and Religious Monkes, togeather with the whole Clergy moſt earneſtly beſought the Diſpoſer of all ſeaſons and tymes, to graunt them dry weather for the comfort of

good people, and honour of his Saint, vntill the procession at least were ended.

And their prayers to this effect, became so effectuall with his diuine Maiesty, that although abundant of raine fell in all other places of the Citty, and fields about it; yet no one droppe thereof fell in the streetes where the body passed: so as all the people present, were greatly amazed to behould mayne showers, as it were, of rayne, already powred out of the cloudes, to hange

miraculouſly in the ayre, ouer their heads, and yet be kept from falling downe vpon them, till the ſolemnity was ended: and therfore they redoubled their praiſes to God, and to the Saint, as Authors of this great miracle wrought euidently before their face.

The Proceſſion ended and the Bishop and Prieſts arriued with the Reliques at the Monaſtery, they were by the Abbot, and his Religious, as Iewells aboue all valew, moſt re-

uerently receaued, & vpon the high Aultar, dedicated to *S. Peter* and *S. Paul*, magnificently placed, where many apparent miracles for the help of ſoules and bodies, are, to Gods great honour glorified in his Saintes, daily performed: whoſe Name be prayſed for euer and euer. Amen.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVI.

The Conclusion, of the Translatour, vnto this second Booke of S. Wenefrids *Life, and Miracles.*

I May say heere of *S. VVenefrids* miracles (of those later especially wrought in *Shrewsbury* vpon such as honoured the Saint, and were cured by the vertue of her reliques) what *S. Augustine* in his 22. Booke of the *Citty of God*, and 8. Chapter, hath left written of a blind man

miraculouſly reſtored to ſight, and other like miracles done at *Millan*, whilſt he liued there, at the holy bodies of *S. Geruaſius* and *Protaſius*, diuinely reuealed and tranſlated by *S. Ambroſe* to another place, as *S. VVenefrids* Reliques were from *Guitherine* vnto *Shrewsbury*; that the Citty, to wit wherein they were done, *grandis erat, & immenſo populo teſte res geſta eſt*, was great, and an immenſe cõcourſe of people able to teſtifie the verity of them. So as he muſt want

all

all humane tayth, and be obstinatly willfull, who shal refuse to belieue them.

Moreouer I adde, that the Author writing this historie, and publishing the same shortly after these miracles were done, & in the same Citty also; would not for very shame haue written vntruly of them, since not only the Inhabitants therof, but himselfe likewise, certainely had seene and knowne them.

But, as *S. Augustine* complayned of the Gentills in

his

his time, for not beleiuing apparent miracles done at Saints Aultars, euen before multitudes of witneſſes, and vpon perſons, certainely knowne to haue bene both diſeaſed and cured: ſo may I heare taxe many Proteſtãts of like incredulity, who are wont to laugh at ſuch vndoubted relations, though neuer ſo anciently and certainely teſtified, by no leſſe witneſſes then *S. Ambroſe*, *S. Hierome*, *S. Auguſtine*, and other holy Fathers, to whom they vſually giue little credit

dit in ſuch Hiſtoricall verities, as they will believe any Gentill, or Heathen Author before them; the which my ſelfe haue proued by many experiences, and for an example, I will heere mention one.

It was my chance ſome yeares ſince, to be the gueſt of a Proteſtant Gentleman in England, of eſpecial note and ranke in the Countrey wher he liued, who ſeing me one day fixedly to look vpõ a faire picture hãging in his Hall, wherein the diuers

torments of some Primitiue Martyrs were liuely represented; Syr, said he, who can belieue (as for my part I cannot) that men, to men, and for Religion only, euer vsed such barbarous cruelties, & more then butcherly inhumanities? To whome for clearing of so certaine and testified a truth, I alleaged what *Tertullian* in sundry places of his workes *S. Cyprian*, *S. Iustine* the Martyr, *S. Hierome*, *S. Ambrose*, and other innumerable Fathers, had either expresly

affir-

affirmed, or ſuppoſed of theſe Martyrs torments, & that in bookes either written to the Martyrs themſelues, or to Heathen magiſtrates their Condemners; yet preuayled I nothing, till calling for *Tacitus*, a Gentill Author, and moſt hatefull enemy to Chriſt himſelfe, with all ſuch as faithfully profeſſed him; I shewed this Gentleman what he had left written of *Nero's* cruelty, vſed againſt Chriſtians, by cauſing them to be put vpon ſtakes in eminét places

of *Rome*, cloathed in pitcht shirts, with their armes extended, and so to be fired in darke nights, as torches to the Citty; with other like inhumane torments, exercised vpon them.

Whereupon he began to credit what his Picture represented: and being asked againe by me, why he believed not before so many testimonies which I had cited vnto him, out of the holy Fathers; he plainely tould me (and it is the common persuasion of Protestants)

ſtants) that moſt of the Fathers were ſuperſtitiouſly inclined, and apt to write Fabulous Legends of Saintes ſufferinges, counterfaite Miracles, and the like, as themſelues ouercredulouſly belieued them.

With which preiudice of opinion many, I doubt not, will come to read this life of *S. VVenefride*, & belieue the leſſe of it, as of things done at home, and long agoe in our owne Country; *Sed ſapientia iuſtificata eſt à filijs ſuis*, but Gods wiſedom & power

manifeſted for the glory of himſelfe, in his Saintes, by ſuch miraculous works teſtified vnto vs, will by deuout Catholiques be piouſly beleiued; not as pointes of fayth, diuinely reuealed, but as pious hiſtories probably written, and worthy for ſuch to be credited.

The

The End of the second Booke.

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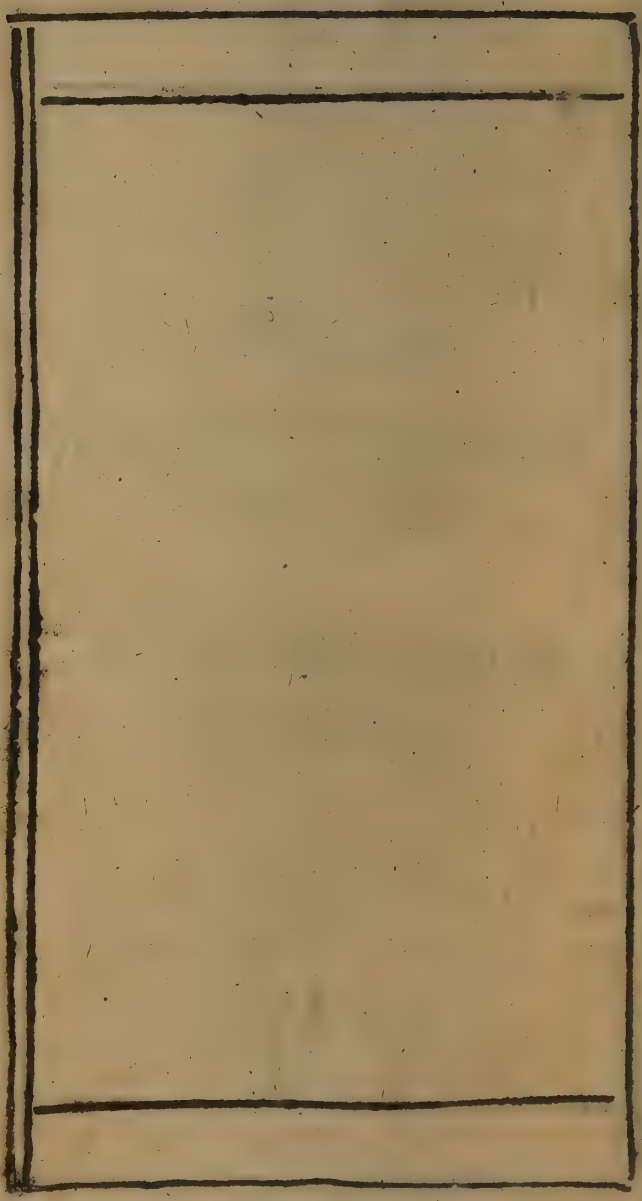
FINIS.

Pſal. 150.

Laudate Dominum in Sanctis eius.

Prayſe our Lord in his Saintes.



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